

WHO WROTE THE MAHATMA LETTERS?

THE FIRST THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF THE COMMUNICA-
TIONS ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY THE
LATE A. P. SINNETT FROM TIBETAN MAHATMAS

by

HAROLD EDWARD HARE

and

WILLIAM LOFTUS HARE

"Whither the argument, like a wind,
takes us, thither we must go."

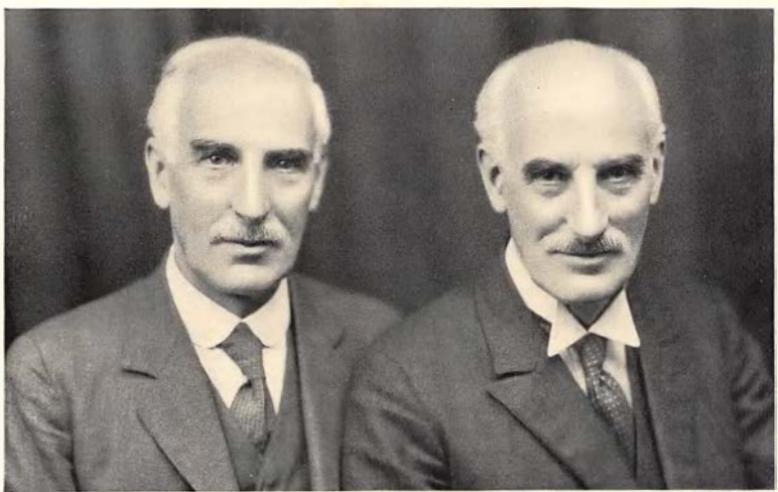
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H. E. AND W. L. HARE

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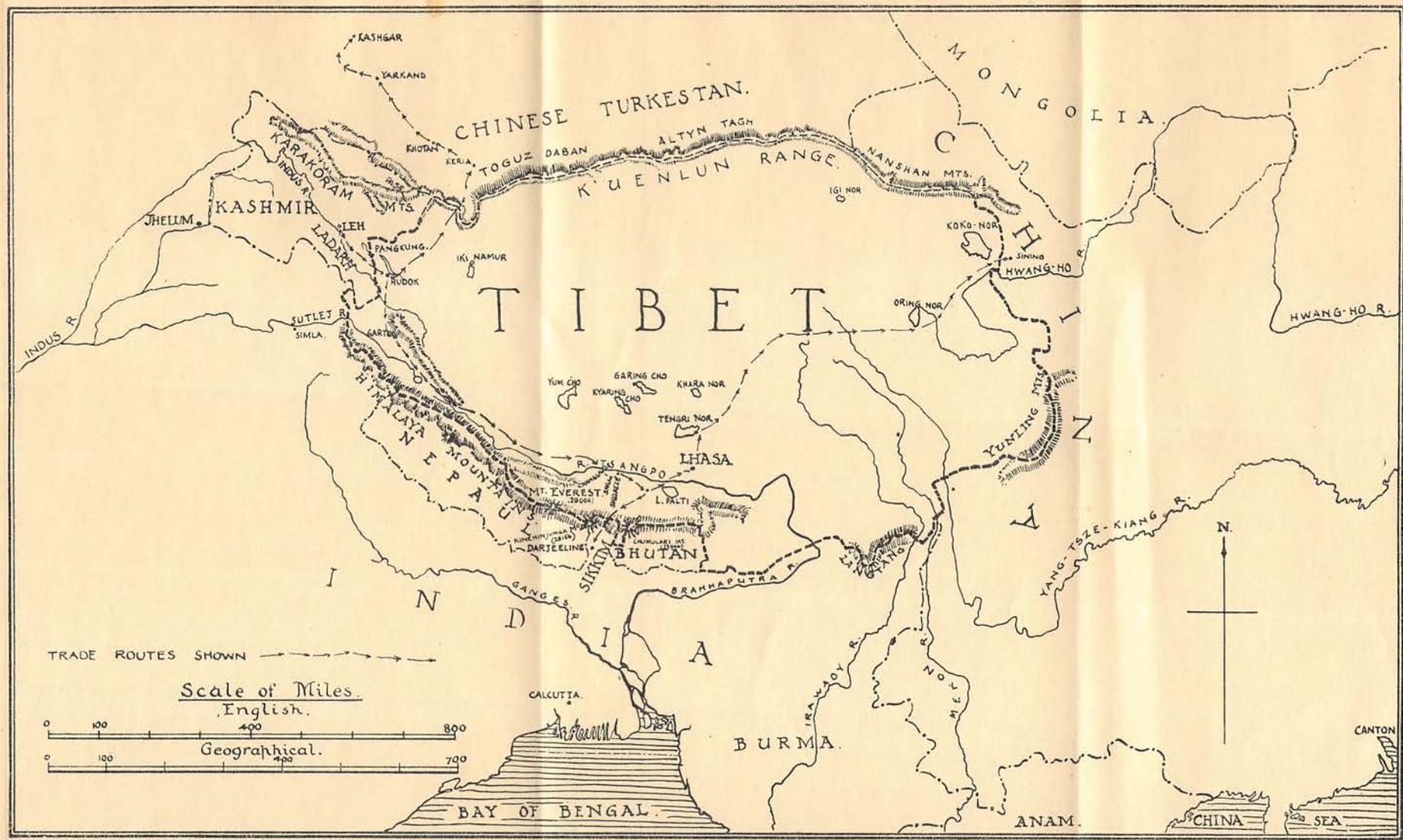
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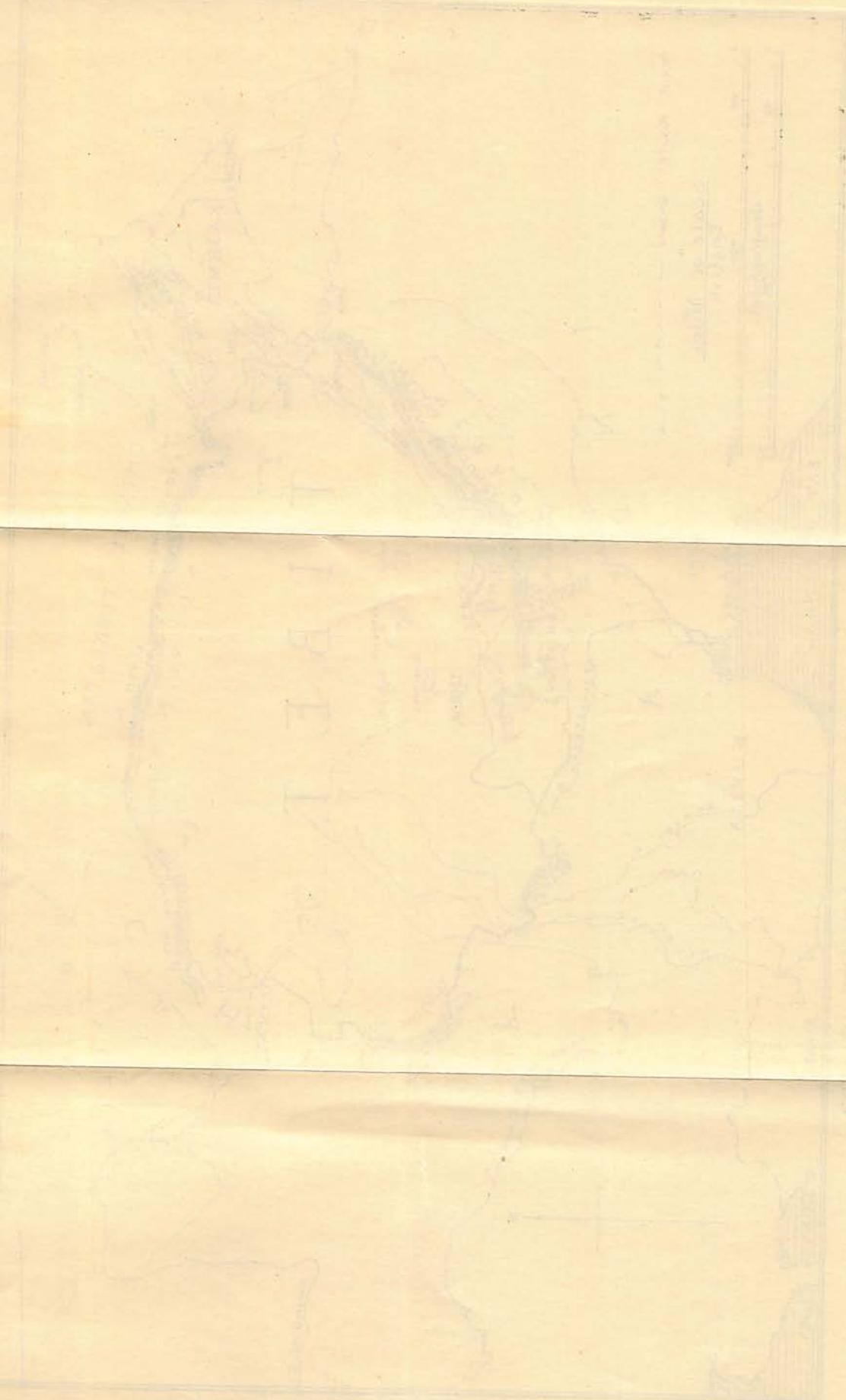
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SKETCH MAP OF TIBET, WITH ADJACENT PARTS OF INDIA, TURKESTAN, AND CHINA.



Map of Oregon showing county boundaries and place names

CONTENTS

PART I. THE PROBLEM

<i>Section I. PREFACE</i>	<i>page</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Section II. THE LITERAL TEXTS</i>	<i>22</i>	
The “Teachings” and the “Letters”; The Compiler’s Preface; The First Complete Mahatmic Revelation; Without Abridgement, Correction or Commentary; Mr. Sinnett’s <i>Occult World</i> Text; Fragmentary and Copiously Corrected; “The Astral Post”; Mr. Sinnett Seeks a Sign and the First Letter is Received.		
<i>Section III. PUBLIC NOTICES OF THE LETTERS</i>	<i>29</i>	
Official Disapproval; For and Against in the Reviews; The <i>Early Teachings</i> Criticized; Mr. Sinnett’s Responsibility.		
<i>Section IV. THE MAHATMAS AT HOME</i>	<i>36</i>	
Geography and Topography of Tibet (Map of Tibet); The Mahatmas as Men and Masters; “Morya” as H.P.B.’s Spiritual Guide; A Jovial Mahatma; “The Venerable Chohan”; The Mahatmas’ Feats of Endurance; Visits to India and “Quick Communications”.		
<i>Section V. THE MAHATMAS’ KNOWLEDGE</i>	<i>43</i>	
Claims to Infallibility; “The Absolute Truth”; “Mahatma Attributes”; The Mahatmas’ Libraries; <i>The Book of Kin-te</i> ; “Your Western Sciences”; The Cosmic Scroll; Portraits of the Mahatmas.		
<i>Section VI. THE FIRST EIGHT LETTERS</i>	<i>56</i>	
“ <i>The Occult World</i> ” Series Examined; Brief Abstract of Letter 1; A Vision, a Voice, and an Avalanche; Tampering with the Mails; Entry of Master “Morya”; Universal Brotherhood.		

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

PART II. THE INVESTIGATION

<i>Section VII. THE PHILOSOPHICAL SECTION</i>	<i>page</i> 67
---	----------------

Substance and Accident; *Esoteric Buddhism*; "Some Vital Errors"; "The Only Right Exposition"; Theosophy without "Theos"; *Theosophia*: the Word and the Doctrine; Theosophy's Star in the West; *Isis Veiled and Unveiled*; Theosophy's Old Testament Rejected; The Mahatmas' Criticisms; Theosophy's Star in the East.

<i>Section VIII. PERSONALITY AND PHILOSOPHY</i>	78
---	----

The Mahatma's Curiosity; Spirits of the Departed; The Great Cycle; The Septenary System; The Numerical Structure of the Universe; Cosmological Queries Answered; The Denial of God.

<i>Section IX. REINCARNATION MISUNDERSTOOD</i>	91
--	----

The Doctrine First Mentioned; The Mahatmas Fore stalled; Mrs. Kingsford's Claims to Priority; "*Isis*" on the Doctrine; Its "Possibility and Impossibility"; "Not a Rule in Nature".

<i>Section X. INDIAN PHILOSOPHY</i>	101
-------------------------------------	-----

The Vedānta Misrepresented; The Meaning of Māyā; Buddhism Corrupted; The Mahāvagga: Rhys Davids' Version; The Mahatma's Version; "The Devachan" and "Sukhāvatī"; Beal's *Catena*; Max Müller's Older Sanskrit Text; Buddha *versus* Buddha.

<i>Section XI. THE STYLE AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE LETTERS</i>	115
--	-----

Not Oriental; Examples of French Grammatical Basis; Transatlantic Elements; Erratic Punctuation; Literary References; The Mahatmas' Model; A Libel on a Laureate; Philosophy, Poetry and Fiction; The Mahatmas' Dog-Latin.

<i>Section XII. THE SO-CALLED "PRECIPITATION" PROCESS</i>	127
---	-----

Mr. Jinarājadāsa's Account; An Evasive Statement; The Mahatmas' Own Account; What says K.H.?; The Process Examined; "Precipitation Unlawful"; A Summary of the Evidence.

Contents

<i>Section XIII. "THE KIDDLE INCIDENT"</i>	<i>page</i> 140
The Mahatma Charged with Plagiarism; Another Bacon-Shakespeare Mystery; Eastern and Western Plagiarism; The Mystery Solved; A Poetical Witness; "The Rosetta Stone"; Three Years After; Mental Telegraphy; The Restored Version.	
<i>Section XIV. "THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT"</i>	152
An Official Excuse for the Kiddle Blunder; Alarm at The T.S. Headquarters; H.P.B. on the Incident; "The Original Scrap of Paper"; A Brief for the Chela; The End of the Incident; On the Side of the Sadducees.	
 PART III. THE DEMONSTRATION	
<i>Section XV. THE BLAVATSKY HYPOTHESIS</i>	165
Mr. Sinnett's Pros and Cons; "Not Impossible"; "A Mere Absurdity"; "Perfectly Unlike"; A New Comparison Proposed; H.P.B.'s and The Mahatmas' Languages; Words and Key-Words; Grammatical Licences; The Split Infinitive; The Dropped Auxiliary Verb; Franco-English Phrases; Sixteen Miscellaneous Parallels; Some Minor Characteristics; Liberties with Proper Names; Biblical References; Mockery and Parody; <i>Consummatum est.</i>	
<i>Section XVI. THE FORBIDDEN LAND</i>	211
Was Madame Blavatsky Ever in Tibet?; Mr. Sinnett's Version; The First Entry: 1856; Mrs. Besant's Version; The First Entry: 1864; Do the Letters Confirm the Story? "Go Not Forth"; A Fatal Letter; Truth Will Out; Damodar's Goings and Comings; Damodar in Substance and Shadow.	
<i>Section XVII. THE MANUSCRIPTS EXAMINED</i>	224
No Precipitation; The Writers of the Letters; The Hands of the Masters; The Hand of Morya; The Styles of the Scriptorium; The Letters in Detail; Paper and Writing Materials; Various Scripts, Measurements, Signatures, Addresses, Seals; The Blavatsky Letters; Signatures and Counter-Signatures; General Remarks on Handwriting; Light from Older Manuscripts.	

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Section XVIII. THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE page 252

Some Early Sceptics Answered; Changes of Policy; Motives for Retirement; Tactics of Bluff; "If There are No Mahatmas"; Three More Touchstones; Four Notable Admissions; "The Well-Known Script"; Mr. Sinnett's Last Thoughts; Blavatsky at Bay; *De Profundis*; Her Own Hypothesis; A Great Evasion.

Section XIX. THE THEOSOPHICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE 275

The Occult Hierarchy; Constructing a Cosmology; The Tibetan Twins; Buddhist-Liberal-Catholic-Mahatmas; The Mahatma and the Presidency; The World Teacher; Clairvoyant Confirmation; The Happy Valley; After Fifty Years; The Chela Djual Khool; Farewells; The Curtain Falls.

Section XX. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

298

The Problem of Motive; Three Suggested Motives: 1. The Power Motive; 2. The Anti-Christian Motive; 3. The Motive of Necessity; The Heel of Achilles; The Opening of the Seals; *Consummatum est.*

Index

321

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE AUTHORS OF "WHO WROTE THE MAHATMA LETTERS?"	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MAP OF TIBET	<i>Facing page</i> 36
MAHATMA KOOT HOOMI	<i>Facing page</i> 50
MAHATMA MORYA	<i>Facing page</i> 62
MADAME BLAVATSKY AND COL. OLCOTT	<i>Facing page</i> 218
MR. A. P. SINNETT	<i>Facing page</i> 238
A MAHATMA'S COUNTER SIGNATURE	<i>Page</i> 243
A K.H. FACSIMILE	<i>Page</i> 248

PART I

THE PROBLEM

SECTION I

P R E F A C E

THE book entitled *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* was published in September, 1923. On receiving a copy of it early in the following year, I opened it with a feeling that I was renewing an old but slight acquaintance with one of the literary Mahatmas, for I remembered having read, about twenty-five years before, in *The Life of Anna Kingsford*, an account of a meeting of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, at which a telegram, said to have been received from an Asiatic sage, was read, giving his authority for the re-appointment to the presidency of the lady named. As there was to have been a contest for the filling of the office, the reading of the telegram—"Remain President, Koot Hoomi"—created what was described as a dramatic situation. The rival candidates perforce became reconciled, and the command in favour of Mrs. Kingsford was duly obeyed. These circumstances no doubt impressed the name and personality of the Mahatma somewhat deeply on my mind.

I have not recalled the incident just mentioned because I suppose it to have had any intrinsic importance, but rather for the sake of bringing out another fact more nearly related to the subject and the writing of this book. This is that in the interval between my first indirect encounter with a Mahatma

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

and my reading of *The Mahatma Letters*, I neither heard nor read anything about these mysterious personages. I was never a Member of the Theosophical Society, nor had I read or even looked into the classics of Theosophy, such as *Isis Unveiled*, *The Occult World*, *Esoteric Buddhism*, *The Secret Doctrine*, or any authoritative text-books in which the Mahatmas had been mentioned as revealers of truth or writers of familiar letters.

I give these personal particulars only to show that so far as the absence of prejudice from my mind might qualify me as a reader or critic of the work, I was fitted to peruse with impartiality the compilation hereafter examined. Consequently I read *The Mahatma Letters* in the spirit of a student, and observed (as much for my own ease as from a sense of justice to other parties) the counsel of Bacon's essay *Of Studies*: "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider."

I had not gone far in the perusal of *The Mahatma Letters* before I began to observe points on which I would fain have asked questions, had there been anyone near enough and in sufficiently responsible authority to answer them. Questions involving historical fact, literary taste and ethical standards arose on almost every page, so that in time it became impossible to maintain a clear conception of the characters, objects and ideas of the reputed writers. And although further progress in the reading of the book increased its problems and

Preface

more heavily engrossed my labours, I saw that in order to do justice to it I must read other books associated with it—at least *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, and perhaps *The Early Teachings of the Masters*, its rival and forerunner.

I had hardly settled down to the task of studying *The Mahatma Letters* and the above-mentioned publications, when the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society began to contribute to *The Theosophist* almost every month instalments of the “Early History” of the Society, in which matter germane to the present study occasionally appeared, and these literary tracts had to be added to my survey. Yet while topics increased, time pressed. *The Mahatma Letters* had gone through four reprints, and *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky*, also to Mr. Sinnett, were likewise in the bookshops. Lastly, on the point of the increasing scope of my inquiries, I had almost concluded my literary labours when I was fortunate in obtaining permission—to which subject I will return later—to examine by commission both the Mahatma and Blavatsky series of manuscripts, and to note particulars of them for employment at my discretion in this book.

The book I am now introducing does not set out to answer all the questions, biographical, philosophical and moral, which the perusal of *The Mahatma Letters* might be expected to raise. It seeks rather to grapple with a simple but fundamental literary problem, which, if it can be satisfactorily solved, will dispose of a multitude of smaller ones.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

On its title-page the authors ask the question: *Who wrote the Mahatma Letters?*, and in its subsequent pages they give the answer.

PART I is entitled THE PROBLEM, in which we state the original theses of several literary sponsors for the Mahatmas as entities and as teachers, and cite from various sources particulars of their characteristics, attributes, knowledge, abilities and abodes.

PART II is entitled THE INVESTIGATION. Here we give in outline the principles of the Mahatmas' Philosophy, note the surprising accretions of personality and controversy in the Letters, and compare some of the authentic documents of Indian Philosophy with the erroneous renderings of them by the writers. Coming closer to the manner and matter of the Letters, we analyse their style, construction and literary references, and examine the conflicting accounts given of their miraculous production and transmission. From the whole mass of matter brought under review a conclusion is drawn adverse to the claims and pretensions of the book. We find that whoever wrote the Mahatma Letters, the Mahatmas did not.

PART III is entitled THE DEMONSTRATION, in which we propose a hypothesis in place of the one we hold to have broken down. We identify, from a number of sources, the habitual hand and style, the ideas and character of the actual writer of the Letters, whom we name. In a late Section of the book we indicate in some detail the profound significance of this discovery; for if the Letters were not written by the Mahatmas, but by some

Preface

person creating their characters and using their invented names, all that has followed and flowed from these early pronouncements must be in one way or other vitiated. Here it is only necessary to say that the recent activities of the late President of the Theosophical Society and her colleagues stand upon and consequently fall into the sandy foundations which we have revealed. For it is indisputable that "The New Theosophical Church", "The World Religion", "The World Teacher", and "The Theosophical University", as promulgated by Mrs. Besant and the late Bishop Leadbeater are all commended to the world on the ultimate authority of a hierarchy of "Oriental sages" whose existence is fictitious, and whose teaching is discredited.

In the same Section a review is made of the history of the Theosophical Society, so far as its doctrine, discipline, government and policy are based upon the belief in the entity of the two Mahatmas and the authenticity of the communications attributed to them.

In closing this Preface we return to the fact, just mentioned, that permission was granted for an inspection to be made of the manuscripts of the two series of Letters. We are pleased to be able to express here our thanks to the custodians of the documents for this facility, which has made it possible for our investigations to penetrate more deeply into the internal and external character of the Mahatma Letters than could otherwise have been done. The permission granted does not, of

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

course, carry with it any degree of assent to the conclusions reached in this book, and we formally dissociate the executrix of the late Mr. Sinnett and the compiler of the two volumes of Letters from any views expressed herein.

Postscript

It has been agreed between Mr. W. Loftus Hare and myself, the joint authors of this book, that I should write the foregoing Preface, which contains a few statements that only have reference to me. Although the greater part of the following work is from my hand, I have to acknowledge that the contributions from my brother form essential parts of the structure and argument. In the Sections dealing with Indian Philosophy, Reincarnation, The Theosophical Superstructure, and in many other places, I have had the advantage of his special knowledge of the subjects therein discussed, and have entrusted to him the examination of the Mahatma and Blavatsky Manuscripts.

It is perhaps necessary to say a little more with reference to the "Superstructure", the main portion of which is my brother's work, in order to show why he was qualified to write it. He was for more

Postscript

than twenty years a member of the Theosophical Society, to which he was attracted by his interest in Comparative Religion and Philosophy—the Society's Second Object—and in 1916 he became an official lecturer in this branch of the work. He took no part in the side issues and aberrations which, again and again, appeared to him to disturb the peace and usefulness of the Society. Nevertheless, he was unwillingly drawn into contentions arising out of new importations which were added to the Society's original Objects. Over a period of ten years, standing sometimes almost alone, he resisted what he considered mistaken policies.

Looking back on these events, and in the light of the conclusions of this book, his critical attitude will appear to have been justified. I may add that although our labours have been thus divided, we join in accepting full responsibility for the facts and arguments advanced in the following pages.

H. E. H.

SECTION II

THE LITERAL TEXTS

The Early Teachings of the Masters, 1881–1883, edited by C. Jinarājadāsa, M.A. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1923.

The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett from Mahatmas M. and K. H. Transcribed, compiled, and with an Introduction by A. T. Barker. T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., London, 1923.

The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett. Transcribed, compiled, and with an Introduction by A. T. Barker. T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., London, 1924.

The “Teachings” and the “Letters”

In April, 1923, the Theosophical Publishing House at Adyar, Madras, announced the forthcoming of *The Early Teachings of the Masters* in an advertisement which said :

“The publication of this important work marks an epoch in the history of The Theosophical Society. It contains all the early teachings given to Messrs. A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume on which the famous book *Esoteric Buddhism* was based. The original questions and answers given to them by the Masters and Their senior pupils are now published for the first time.”

The Literal Texts

It is evident that in April, 1923, it must have been an urgent matter for the custodians of the *Teachings* to bring them to light, not only because of their intrinsic merits, but because another hand was even then preparing in England a publication likely to mark more distinctly than the Adyar *Codex* "an epoch in the history of the Theosophical Society". This second book—*The Mahatma Letters*—was published in September, 1923. Three reprints of it have been made, followed by a fifth and sixth impression of a second edition, with a revised text. Hence we judge that the *Letters* must have had a large sale. It would be obvious, if it had not been stated, that the London editor worked from the complete series of the original Letters, and the Indian editor from a small selection of copies. These copies are said to have been delivered by Messrs. Sinnett and Hume, "by order of the Master K.H., to H.P.B. and Damodar Mavalankar", and filed at Adyar. At a later date the editor discovered in Australia, and collected from the manuscript books of Bishop Leadbeater and Miss Francesca Arundale, the remainder of his set. Nothing is vouched for these copies on the score of strict accuracy, nor is anything stated as to who wrote them out.

Seeing that *The Early Teachings of the Masters* is a small volume compared with *The Mahatma Letters*, it is a nice point whether the promise of the Publishing House at Adyar to give "all the early teachings" is fulfilled, unless the large quantities of deleted matter are regarded as not

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

doctrinal but personal (which assuredly they are) and therefore negligible. A first glance at the two books by way of comparison shows that we cannot utter in connection with them the axiom of Euclid that "the greater includes the less"; because though "the less" in this case is much smaller in bulk than the greater, it contains by way of extensive and careful correction a quantity of added matter which makes it not so much a reduction as a variation of its original. As we shall have little more to say about the smaller book, a few facts as to its text may be given here.

Letter x in *The Mahatma Letters* appears in three parts in *The Early Teachings* (pp. 208, 214, 232). It contains 118 corrections in punctuation, 50 significant alterations in type, 60 corrections in spelling, transposition and omissions of words, five corrections in a long Latin phrase, three in Sanskrit and one in logic; besides which a misrepresentation in mythology, which sacrifices allegory to delicacy, is introduced. Saturn, who in the myth and the Letter is said to have *devoured* his children, is only permitted by the taste of the reviser to have *destroyed* them. Since this "Teaching" was "copied out at Simla, September 28, '82", the two hundred or more improvements were probably made by Mr. Sinnett.

The First Complete Mahatmic Revelation

The Mahatma manuscripts were bequeathed without conditions by the late A. P. Sinnett to his

The Literal Texts

executrix, and have been published with her consent in book form, *verbatim et literatim*. There can be no doubt that their publication will be of great service in the settlement of long-standing doubts in the public mind in regard to several important matters, for readers now have before them, for the first time, the whole, or all that is left of the Mahatmic revelation of the years 1880 to 1884, untouched by selection, abridgment, expurgation, correction or commentary. Never before have all these factors been absent from the publications, and never has it been possible for a disciple of the doctrine—still less a doubter—to form a correct judgment on the full Mahatmic text; hence such a judgment has never been made. For these reasons, then, Mr. Barker is to be highly praised and warmly thanked for the faith he has exhibited and the labour he has spent in the production of an indispensable document.

Mr. Sinnett's Corrected Text

It is necessary to support by some literal facts the observations just made as to the incompleteness and incorrectness of the first revealed texts. It may surprise not a few readers of *The Mahatma Letters* to learn, on opening the book, that its five hundred pages contain about one hundred and thirty Letters, only the first seven of which formed the basis of the astonishing disclosures in Mr. Sinnett's book, *The Occult World*, and were quoted in fragments therein. Moreover, the “unequivocal”

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

assurance given by Mr. Sinnett (p. 69) that he would "in no case alter one syllable of the passages actually quoted" was of little value to the reader, for within the terms of this promise—if we may trust Mr. Barker's transcriptions—Mr. Sinnett considered himself at liberty to make about fifty literal corrections, seventy-five alterations of styles of type (capitals, italics and quotation marks), two hundred punctuations, and thirty significant and obviously prudent omissions.

Of the sixteen Letters (ix to xxv) which form the basis of *Esoteric Buddhism*—as well as of *The Early Teachings of the Masters*, only two (xxiiib and xxv) are quoted literally in the earlier work, where they are as generously corrected as the case requires. The rest are by authority carefully re-written in abstract.

"The Astral Post"

Comparing the circumstances attending the first delivery of the Letters to Mr. Sinnett and their present aspect to a reader's eye, the most significant contrast is that they are now unheralded by "occult phenomena". This was not the case when—as was believed—they first crossed the Himâlayan snows, and were mysteriously delivered by "the astral post" on to writing-desks and breakfast-tables, or dropped "out of nothing, so to speak", "on the noses" of their appointed recipients.

Without going over the romantic story of the life-preparation in the occult arts which fitted the

The Literal Texts

principal agent in the delivery of the Letters (Madame Blavatsky) to procure them in a continuous series, it is imperative to notice the small premonitions which convinced Mr. Sinnett, the editor of *The Pioneer* of Allahabad, that some greater wonder was waiting at his door.

In the year 1880, says Mr. Sinnett, Madame Helena P. Blavatsky (one of the founders of the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875) came to Simla, in the course of her cross-continental wanderings, and very soon startled the Anglo-Indian community there by her amazing and miraculous-seeming gifts. Bells were heard as if rung in mid-air, raps were made on tables and doors, consumed cigarette papers were re-created, letters were found in sewn-up pillows, cups and saucers were dug out of hill-sides, and water was somehow raised in a waste wilderness when a picnic party was in want of coffee. These of Madame Blavatsky's works, wonderful as they were, Mr. Sinnett held to be trifles compared with a much higher faculty she possessed and frequently exercised; and that was "the magnificent power of psychological telegraphy with her occult friends" (*O.W.*, p. 23).

Mr. Sinnett Seeks a Sign

Who were these "occult friends", and where did they abide? They were at first called "The Brothers", and afterwards "The Masters", and were said to live in Tibet. One of them, as we

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

learn from a sketch of Madame Blavatsky's life by Mr. Sinnett, had been her guide from childhood, and the other her guru in "a course of study carried on for seven years in a Himâlayan retreat" (*O.W.*, p. 23). When Mr. Sinnett had become convinced (like Macbeth in the case of the metaphysical sisters) that these remote-dwelling Masters were "of more than mortal knowledge", he was not long in asking to be allowed to write to them. To this proposal Madame Blavatsky agreed; a letter was given to her "addressed to the universal Brotherhood" (the sub-title to the already existing Theosophical Society), and out of that small beginning arose *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. "A day or two afterwards I found one evening on my writing-table the first letter sent to me by my new correspondent" (*O.W.*, p. 65).

In the circumstances described, Mr. Sinnett was not unreasonably persuaded that he had received "by astral post" a letter from Tibet; and if he had, his conviction was sound that his experience not only marked an epoch in his own life, but also in the unfoldment of human knowledge. For the phenomenon suggested that long-accepted principles as to time, space and matter were shaken to their foundations. What could he do better than make himself the evangelist of this startling revelation, for which office, indeed, he seemed to have been chosen? *The Occult World*, the first literary fruit of Mr. Sinnett's strange experience, was published in London early in 1881.

SECTION III

PUBLIC NOTICES OF THE LETTERS

THE reception of *The Occult World* by the Theosophical nucleus in India and the English reading public constituted what was thought to be the beginning of a new philosophic epoch, and fifty years of writing, speaking and organizing have since been based upon it. Men and women have lived and died for the thesis once delivered by unseen hands to Mr. Sinnett, for its elaboration and fruition in the passing years, and for the philosophical and hierarchical superstructure which last of all has risen upon it. This being so, it is somewhat surprising that the first complete presentation of its authoritative documents, in the winter of 1923, should have excited little interest, either in the daily Press or in official Theosophical journals, and should have passed quietly to the hands and bookshelves of devotees and doubters without receiving acclamation or criticism worthy of its importance. Whether it be that *The Mahatma Letters* is considered too long to read, too dull to enjoy or too dangerous to be acknowledged, certain it is that, with a few exceptions, both friends and foes have turned away from it as though it were one of those long epitaphs, of which Pope says: "One half will never be believed; the other never read."

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Official Disapproval

Four notices of *The Mahatma Letters* by members of the Theosophical Society have come into our hands. Even the most favourable is more apologetic than enthusiastic, and coolly says the book will be read by many "with consternation". It labours rather to prove Mr. Sinnett unworthy to have received the Letters, and even treacherous in his disclosure of them, than to prove them worthy of our credence. Another reviewer, less favourable than the first to the thesis of the book, dispassionately puts it on the Index of Doubts, scarcely concealing the fact that he thinks more than he says.

Two semi-official notices of the book appeared in a magazine formerly called *Theosophy*. One deals only with a small point in Astrology, and the other is a pathetic little review, in which a highly-placed Theosophical leader regrets that Mr. Sinnett did not see that it was his duty to bequeath the Letters to the Society—whose property they virtually are—in which case, it is said, they would certainly not have been published.

The "Early Teachings" Criticized

The book received no official mention in *The Theosophist*, but the *Early Teachings of the Masters* (which may fairly be described as a "pocket edition" of some of the Letters) was very candidly reviewed in the February number (1925) by Mr. L. A.

Public Notices of the Letters

Compton-Rickett. This writer thinks that most readers of the *E.T.M.* will glance through them "with considerable surprise". Questions may arise, he says, as to the reasons for the *late* and unexplained publication of these *early* teachings; also as to whether their statements and style have been "distorted", and whether the "rough ore of the gold of wisdom" has to be broken up and sifted by the reader's discrimination. The reviewer begins with "salutations of profound reverence" to the Masters, but at the same time he proposes to remain "free, wholly free, to criticize" them according to his measure of light. Briefly stated, he finds the style of the *E.T.M.* "fragmentary, forensic and partisan"; he looks in vain for "comprehensive, judicial, dignified and tender" language, and finds only contempt and scorn for Western science and religion. The Masters deny the real existence of the Christ as the founder of Christianity, and only concede a mortal existence to "the man Jeshu"; while they replace his "all-wise, all-loving, Heavenly Father" by the blind forces of matter, energy and motion.

This "wholly free" criticism ends with Goethe's prayer for "more light" and a profound salutation to "Those who speak from afar".

Although Mr. Compton-Rickett's review of the *E.T.M.* appeared late enough after the publication of *The Mahatma Letters* for him to have read the latter book, he does not appear to have done so; otherwise he would have received from it the "more light" he prayed for. He would have realized not

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

only why the *early* teachings were published so *late* and were "unexplained", but why they were given out at all. Moreover, his question as to whether they have been "distorted" would also have received an answer, for what strikes him as "the rough ore" of the *E.T.M.* is almost as fine gold compared with *The Mahatma Letters*.

Mr. Sinnett's Responsibility

As the literal publication of the Mahatmas' Letters, at any time and in any quantity or form, appears to have agitated to no small extent the minds of some of their disciples, and is supposed by many to have been categorically forbidden—we think it serviceable to say, without offering an opinion on the wisdom of the course, that the announcement to the Western world of the Mahatmas' existence, and the publication of the substance of their earlier Letters, appears to us to have been not only permitted but prompted and approved by the writers. It is true that this authorization was afterwards regretted and reversed, when its effects were realized; but that is another matter. Although it is clear that Mr. Sinnett was intellectually eager to deliver the staggering challenge from Eastern to Western science which *The Occult World* contained, we are convinced, from reading it, and more so from reading the Letters, that in doing this he was not committing a Promethean theft of the Mahatmic fire. On the contrary, it appears to

Public Notices of the Letters

us from the following passages that the torch was deliberately put into his hand.

"Of course you ought to write your book," says the Master K.H. in *Letter V*. "Do so, by all means, and any help I can give you I will. . . . Take the Simla phenomena and your correspondence with me as the subject" (p. 21). In *Letter VIII* the same Master says: "I confess that I *do* take an interest in this book and its success . . ." (p. 32). "I lay no restrictions upon your making use of anything I may have written to you or Mr. Hume, having full confidence in your tact and judgment as to what should be printed and how it should be presented." The writer then excepts from publication one Letter, and adds: "As to the rest—I relinquish it to the mangling tooth of criticism" (p. 34). Encouragement of this kind pursued Mr. Sinnett to the very day of his embarkation for Europe, where the book was to be brought out. "Should you actually need now and again the help of a happy thought as your work progresses, it may, very likely be, *osmosed* into your head—if sherry bars not the way, as it has already done at Allahabad" (p. 37). An unkind cut, perhaps, this last sentence; but could even John the Presbyter have wanted a clearer commission of the Spirit to write the letters to the seven Churches that were in Asia?

Mr. Sinnett wrote *The Occult World* on the sea-voyage to England, and based it on seven of the eight Letters he had at that time received. Of the thirty-six pages in the present book which these

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

eight Letters now occupy, only twenty, or a little more than half, were used for *The Occult World*. While in London putting it through the press, Mr. Sinnett received warm commendations from the Master in Tibet in *Letter XXXI* (which we think ought to have been printed as Letter ix). "It is from the depths of an unknown valley . . . that your friend sends you these lines. . . . Your future book is a little jewel" (p. 240). On returning to India, Mr. Sinnett received by "phenomenal" means—"It fell out of nothing, so to speak"—a letter beginning: "Welcome, good friend and brilliant author, welcome back! . . . And now, what about *the book*?" (p. 38). . . . "The book is out, and we have to patiently wait for the results of that *first serious shot at the enemy*" (p. 50). A small note numbered cxxi (which ought from the date and contents to be *Letter X*) gratifies Mr. Sinnett by telling him that the Master had presented *The Occult World* to his Master—"The Chohan"—of whom more anon. Lastly on this topic, at the end of *Letter XLIX* we learn that "your *Occult World* was discussed and commented upon at the Lamasery at Ghalaring-Tcho" (p. 286). Although the arrival of the book in Tibet may have seemed something like "coals carried to Newcastle" to the Lamas, there is no hint that it was regarded by them as an improper disclosure of sealed knowledge to the Western world.

The Editor of *The Occult Review*, in a notice in March, 1924, questions "the justification for publishing correspondence of the kind which its

Public Notices of the Letters

recipient was specifically instructed to treat as confidential". Another reviewer in the same magazine says: "The letters, be it remembered, were strictly secret, and were ordered, in a dozen places, not to be published." There is basis enough in the Letters for the above remarks, but it must be remembered, in justification of Mr. Sinnett, that the inhibiting passages came too late; the outline of approval traced above (with the hint dropped on p. 201 with regard to *Esoteric Buddhism*) is clear enough authority for Mr. Sinnett's two books; he published no Letters independently of these, although it appears from the following passages in Letter LXIII that he wished to do so and was forbidden:

"When our first correspondence began, there was no idea then of any publications being issued on the basis of the replies you might receive" (p. 356). "The letters, in short, were not written for publication or public comment upon them, but for private use, and neither M. nor I will ever give our consent to see them thus handled" (p. 357).

SECTION IV

THE MAHATMAS AT HOME

Geography and Topography of Tibet

As a preparation to the closer approach to the Mahatmas and their physical habitat, we give a sketch-map of Tibet, showing its Indian and Chinese frontiers. As there is much difference between the Mahatmas' spelling of place-names and that of modern maps, we think it best to use the latter. When there is a significant variation, we shall mention it. Lhasa is of course the heart of the country, though not, apparently, the principal abode of the Mahatmas, who often speak of their journeys to it as "long". The name of the forbidden city was written *H'Lassa* in the 'sixties of last century; but the Mahatmas write it in three ways in these Letters—L'Hassa, L'hassa and Lhassa.

Having passed in thought into the Mahatmas' country, we must now obtain a general idea of their activities, both as men and as "Masters". We must learn, if we can, who and how many they are, where and how they live, whether they preach, teach and travel, or study and operate in occult retreat. Above all, we must learn what is the range of their knowledge and their physical and mental powers, and necessarily, how they write, send and receive their Letters.

The Mahatmas at Home

The Mahatmas as Men and Masters

A few answers to the above questions are indicated in the book before us and its associated publications. Only two Mahatmas are named as writers of *The Mahatma Letters*—Koot Hoomi (K.H.) and Morya (M.), and they alone are said to be instrumental in the dissemination in this age of the Occult Philosophy (p. 367). They are not Tibetans, but Indians; the first-named we take to have been born in the Punjab just within the nineteenth century. He came to Europe in his youth, says Mr. Sinnett, for the purpose of study, and he himself refers to “the little university education and inkling of European manners that has fallen to my share” (p. 15). A playful reference by K.H. to “Munich beer-hall beauties” (p. 285) would suggest he sojourned in Germany.

A Jovial Mahatma

If Mahatma Morya was Madame Blavatsky’s “guide” when she was a child—as we are told in Mr. Sinnett’s *Incidents in the Life of H. P. Blavatsky*—he would have been born a Rajput a decade or so before K.H., and would have watched over little Helena’s first visit to England in the year 1844. It is not made clear in the Letters as to whether M. has ever come West in the flesh, although he is mentioned in the diaries of Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky as an astral visitant to New York. K.H. says of him that he “knows

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

very little English and *hates writing*" (p. 84). He is said to be stout of body and jovial of temper, and he once mentions a stoical dinner he is about to prepare, but doubts whether it would satisfy his epicurean disciple. At another time, reclining in Lhasa, he enjoys a pipe sent to him by Mr. Sinnett, to replace one he broke in a Mahatmic rage (p. 431).

The liberty that Mahatma M. allows himself in respect of tobacco smoking may not strike a European reader as worthy of remark, but when we learn from two highly reputed British travellers in Tibet that smoking is in that country regarded as a crime, we wonder where Mahatma Morya obtained his tobacco, how he escaped detection in smoking it, or, in the alternative, from whom he received special dispensation to indulge in it. Dr. McGovern, the author of *To Lhasa in Disguise*, says: "Tobacco smoking is in Tibet the most heinous vice, the greatest crime against religion and decency," and Mr. George Knight, F.R.G.S., in a note in *The Theosophical Review*, July, 1925, confirms this statement. He writes: "It is strictly forbidden to smoke in Tibet."

Spiritual Discipline

K.H., without giving the locality of his abode, speaks of his house as being "full of young and innocent chelas" (p. 243) and of "preparations for initiation"; he is therefore by no means a solitary liver, except on occasions of spiritual discipline. Both the Brothers break off some of their Letters,

The Mahatmas at Home

whether long or short, with the abrupt remark that they are "called to duty", but we cannot visualize what the duty is, or who imposes it. They speak of their Brotherhood as a numerous body, and imply its existence as a vast secret organization existing for "millenniums" of years. They go to Lhasa at the beginning of every Lunar Year to take part in the elaborate festivals, and they acknowledge the Dalai Lama as their "Priestly King". Shigatze (or Tchigadze) is a place more often mentioned than any other, and several of the Letters are said to have been written from there. It is a little south of Lhasa, on the river Tsang-po, and it would not surprise us to learn that it is the exoteric abode of the Mahatmas. Both Brothers describe themselves as Buddhists, and call Gautama their "Lord", and all their references to the Tibetan people and the Lamas are fraternal, though what is their organic connection with the latter and the lamaseries it is impossible to say.

The Venerable Chohan

Above the Masters, as already said, is the "Chohan", sometimes called "venerable" or "all-powerful". He never writes letters, and is only reported as uttering short and emphatic sentences on questions submitted to him. Very often he vetoes the plans of the minor Brothers in their Western operations, and his stern will is said to be an obstacle to many coveted revelations which the disciples crave and

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

which the Mahatmas themselves say they would willingly make. The Chohan seldom condescends to give reasons for what he disallows. He is represented as generally severe, but occasionally indulgent and benign, as, for instance, when he "gently smiles from the corner of an eye, . . . ever since he saw you (Mr. Sinnett) become President"—of the "Eclectic" Branch of the Theosophical Society (p. 319). At other times he speaks to K.H. with patronizing approval of Mr. Sinnett, by saying "This *Peling*" (i.e. European or Englishman) has "really *redeeming qualities*" (p. 396). Again, for the excellence of his review of *The Perfect Way* (a contemporary and perhaps a rival revelation to the Mahatma Letters), Mr. Sinnett is told that he is "beginning to attract the Chohan's attention" (p. 431).

The "Maha-Chohan" would seem to be a still higher being than the Chohan, for he holds in his awful hands the pledges for life and death given by the "Inner Circle" of the Theosophical Society (p. 325).

The Mahatma's Feats of Endurance

Mahatma K.H. travels a good deal, and is capable of astonishing endurance. A proposal sent to him by letter from Mr. A. O. Hume, an associate of Mr. Sinnett, cost him a journey to the northern boundary of Tibet, to the mountains of "Kouen-lun" (K'uenlun), to consult the Chohan (p. 12); and at another time he had ridden "48 hours

consecutively" (p. 422). On the same occasion he "took no sleep for over 60 hours" (p. 24). Once he even outdid this feat by remaining "for over nine days in his stirrups without dismounting" (p. 286). The Mahatma's horse, we think, ought to have been mentioned in these despatches.

The gateways leading into and out of Tibet are in the north-west near Kashmir and in the south at Sikkim Pass by way of Darjeeling. Hence we sometimes find the Mahatmas in the flesh at these places. K.H. comes through into Lhadak in Kashmir and writes a note from there. Further, he writes a long Letter (No. iv) at Amrita Saras, the "Holy Pool" of Amritsar. A little later he comes as far west as Jhelum in the Punjab, to send a telegram.

"Quick Communications"

We may add that we have had the privilege of seeing the Jhelum telegram, which seems to have been sent in proof of a "phenomenon", for the Mahatma makes this comment on it in Letter iv: "Received at Amritsar on the 27th inst., at 2 p.m., I got your letter about thirty miles beyond Rawul Pindie, five minutes later, and had an acknowledgment wired to you from Jhelum at 4 p.m. on the same afternoon. Our modes of accelerated delivery and quick communications are not then, as you will see, to be despised by the Western world" (p. 13). Lest the Western world, through ignorance of Indian geography, should fail to

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

apprehend the nature of this particular wonder, another reference to it in Letter v shows that the "phenomenon" consisted in the receipt of a letter at Amritsar at 2 p.m. and the despatch by the receiver of an acknowledgment of it from Jhelum (say two hundred English miles away) at 4 p.m. (p. 19).

It is perhaps an ironical coincidence that the Mahatma's Letter iv, in which he expatiates on the "quick communications" of the astral post, should have taken *six days* to reach Mr. Sinnett, for it was dated at the Holy Pool, October 29th, and was received at Allahabad on November 5th.

SECTION V

THE MAHATMAS' KNOWLEDGE

Claims to Infallibility

COMING to the theory advanced as to the range of the Mahatmas' knowledge, it will suffice if we give a few explicit statements of the claims made for them by their disciples, as well as some passages in their own Letters relative to the fulness and variety of the resources they have at hand.

To mention first the accepted form of the Mahatmas' title—"The Masters of the Wisdom"—this is a claim significant enough, but we may add to it Mr. Sinnett's understanding of the content of the title. In *The Occult World* he says: "I have come into some contact with persons who are heirs of a greater knowledge concerning the mysteries of Nature and humanity than modern culture has yet evolved; and my present wish is to sketch the outlines of this knowledge" (p. 1). Farther on he says: "The clairvoyant faculties of the adepts are so perfect and complete that they amount to a species of omniscience as regards mundane affairs" (p. 11). And again: "There is reason to believe that such adepts have existed in all historic ages. They constitute a Brotherhood, or Secret Association, which ramifies all over the East, but the principal seat of which for the present I gather to be in Thibet" (p. 20).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

“The Absolute Truth”

In the Preface to the original edition of *Esoteric Buddhism*, written two years later than *The Occult World*, Mr. Sinnett restates in more confident terms his view of the Mahatmas' knowledge, and enlarges on its particulars. He says: “In the course of ages the block of knowledge thus accumulated, concerning the origin of the world and of man and the ultimate destinies of our race—concerning also the nature of other worlds and states of existence . . . has come to be looked on by its custodians as constituting the absolute truth concerning spiritual things.” . . . “The secret doctrine* which, to a considerable extent, I am now enabled to expound, is regarded . . . as a mine of entirely trustworthy knowledge. . . . This is a bold claim indeed, but I venture to announce the following exposition as one of immense importance to the world, because I believe that claim can be substantiated” (xv-xvi).

“Mahatma-Attributes”

The substantiation promised by Mr. Sinnett in his Preface is worked out in twelve chapters in the book, only the first of which, on *Esoteric Teachers*, concerns us here. It repeats the claims made above, and elaborates the picture of the arduous and exalted life of the Adepts. We conclude these

* It is of interest to note the first use here by Mr. Sinnett of the words “secret doctrine,” which became the title of Madame Blavatsky's subsequent book.

The Mahatmas' Knowledge

extracts with a somewhat puzzling attempt by Mr. Sinnett to reconcile the admitted fallibility of the Mahatmas in certain matters with their omniscience in others. He says: "While the adept may be a man quite surprisingly liable to err sometimes in the manipulation of worldly business . . . on the other hand, directly a Mahatma comes to deal with the higher mysteries of spiritual science, he does so by virtue of the exercise of his Mahatma-attributes, and in dealing with these can hardly be recognized as liable to err" (*E.B. Annotations*, pp. 17—18).

Although Mr. Sinnett's testimony, in the pages from which we have quoted, is emphatic enough, it cannot be said that the high claims he makes for his teachers are consistent or convincing. In his first book he says the clairvoyant Mahatmas have "a species of omniscience as regards mundane affairs". Hence we are not prepared for the statement in the second book that they are "liable to err . . . in worldly business". We are curious to know, in the first place, whether "a species of omniscience" is something less than absolute and universal omniscience, and if so, whether it is anything more than "liability to err". In the second place, may we inquire what is the difference between the "mundane affairs" of *The Occult World* and the "worldly business" of *Esoteric Buddhism*? If, as the terms seem to imply, they both describe one class of things, there cannot be much to choose between a species of omniscience attaching to the first and liability to err attaching to the second. In any case it is hard to divine why the

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Mahatmas undertake worldly business at all—if they do—if it brings them under the just censure of inferior men. For wherever a Mahatma is liable to err, he is on a level with his pupil in matters where the pupil can test him, which is to his disadvantage as a teacher.

The Mahatmas' Libraries

Of more interest to us, perhaps, as showing the Mahatmas to be men of like passions with ourselves, are the statements made in the Letters with regard to the intellectual facilities available to the Tibetan teachers. Let it be granted that in the exercise of their "Mahatma-attributes" they are (as they say) "the keepers of the sacred light" (p. 215) and the guardians of "the Tree of Life and Wisdom" (p. 31), yet we cannot say it is nothing to us that they are also the curators of the biggest and most complete library in existence. Mahatma K.H. tells us that he and his Brothers have "the privilege of taking out whole sentences from the dictionary of *Pai-Wouen-Yen-Fu* the greatest in the world, full of quotations from every known writer, and containing all the phrases ever used" (p. 364).

The Book of Kin-te

In addition to the super-Samuel-Johnson dictionary just mentioned, the Mahatmas tell us they possess an archaic book amounting in bulk to "volumes upon volumes" (p. 81). It is in several places called

The Mahatmas' Knowledge

(with the freedom of spelling so characteristic of these Letters) the *Book of Kinte*, *Kin-ti*, *Kin-tee*, *Khin-te* and *Khintee*; but we are also told that it is "vulgarily pronounced" *Kin-to*, which strikes us as strange, seeing that it is elsewhere called a "secret book". Mr. Jinarājadāsa (following *The Secret Doctrine*) prints it *Kiu-ti*, but however spelt or catalogued, it is held to be an authoritative work, several times mentioned almost with awe, but never literally quoted. K.H. says that Madame Blavatsky "knows it by rote", and would translate it if requested. Once we get something like a peep into its pages, when K.H. says that in reading Baron D'Holbach's *Essais sur la Nature*,* "I might have imagined I had our book of Kin-ti before me" (p. 155).

"Your Western Sciences"

Judging from the mention throughout the book of about thirty modern philosophical and scientific writers (among them Grant Allen, Brewster, Bucke, Crookes, Cuvier, Darwin, Dawkins, Edison, Faraday, Fiske, Flammarion, Geikie, Hamilton, Halley, Huxley, Lockyer, Lubbock, Phipson, Priestley, Pritchard, Raleigh, Cowper Ranyard, Ross, Siemens, Spencer, Tyndall and Wallace) and from the vigorous polemics maintained against some of them, or the patronizing approval lavished

* Perhaps this writer's *Système de la Nature* is in the Mahatma's mind. The work was known in the eighteenth century as "The Bible of Atheism", and its author reputed as the greatest materialist of his time.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

upon others, we conclude that although the East, by the occult hypothesis, has nothing to learn from the West, yet it takes note of its many floundering errors and its few and fortunate "guesses at truth". Let the Mahatma K.H. himself bear witness to this attitude of mind in his remarkable Letter xxii, dealing mainly with Science. It is consistent with the East's constant tone of contempt for Western science that the Mahatma should in the following passage entirely disavow any indebtedness to it:

"I am no man of science with regard to, or in connection with modern learning. My knowledge of your Western Sciences is *very* limited in fact; and you will please bear in mind that all my answers are based upon, and derived from, our Eastern occult doctrines regardless of their agreement or disagreement with those of exact science" (p. 166).

The Cosmic Scroll

But, when all is said, the Mahatmas' most quoted and most trusted books are not "the running brooks" of Nature, or the skin-bound tomes of the Lamaseries, or even the incoming new editions (if any) from the Western publishers. Their constantly read and most authoritative records are in the "Akasic Library" itself, on the primeval passive pages of the Ether. "Not *your* ether", the Mahatma hastens to remark (p. 166), and we note the fact, which we had already suspected.

An image of everything that is or ever was is "impressed upon the Akasa", and it is part of the

The Mahatmas' Knowledge

“Mahatma-attributes” to be able at will to read it. “When you write upon some subject you surround yourself with books of references, etc.; when we write upon something the Western opinion about which is unknown to us, we surround ourselves with hundreds of paras: upon this particular topic from dozens of different works—impressed upon the Akasa” (p. 364).

This power of reading the Akasa is, then, the crown of the Mahatmas’ powers; it is the knowledge of knowledges, the Aaron’s rod of all their other abilities, for it can go back to the deep deposits of the past, it can skim the cream of current events, and look “down the arches of the years”, to things yet to be. To show that we are in no way stretching the Mahatmas’ claim, let us quote K.H.’s own words:

“I have a habit of often quoting, *minus* quotation marks—from the maze of what I get in the countless folios of our Akasic libraries (“our libraries”, quotha!) so to say—with eyes shut. Sometimes I may give out thoughts that will see light years later; at other times what an orator, a Cicero may have pronounced ages earlier, and at others, what was not only pronounced by modern lips but already either written or printed” (p. 324).

A poet has said that “a little learning is a dangerous thing”, but what would he have thought of the risks attending the possession of a “Mahatma-attribute”, and of the quantity and quality of the incoming knowledge sketched in the above extract?

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Who would desire the uncertainties of wandering blindfold in this Akasic "maze"—where past, present and future, speech, writing and printing, were rolled into one—if a little "Western" twilight might instead be had, bringing back into view the familiar guideposts of time, space and quotation marks, and other homely utilities?

Portraits of the Mahatmas

The privilege of seeing the Mahatmas face to face, enjoyed as a matter of course by Madame Blavatsky, was held out by her to their more earnest disciples as one of the fruits of successful probation. Although in course of time this prospect became more and more a far-off occult event, Mr. Sinnett was privately encouraged to hope for some appropriate recognition of his exceptional services. At an early date in the Mahatmic revelation, he was granted—accidently, as it seemed, and in a half-waking state—a vision of K.H. "in astral form", as he recorded on a leaf of one of his Master's letters. There was nothing to show, however, that his assurance arose from a recognition of his visitor's features, for he had never seen them in the flesh or in a picture. His belief in the apparition was an inference from the fact that an object mysteriously removed from his bedroom had been restored next day in another place as an "occult phenomenon". Nevertheless, it was reasonable that Mr. Sinnett, selected as the Mahatmas' missioner to the Western world, should require some more definite know-



MAHATMA KOOT HOOMI

From a Drawing attributed to a German Artist, Herr Schmiechen

The Mahatmas' Knowledge

ledge as to what manner of men, physically considered, his teachers were, and it is evident from the correspondence that H.P.B. held out to him and to others hopes of the gratification of their desires through the medium of portraiture. In this way faith would be fortified and opposition broken down. The following extracts are an outline of the promise and its performance.

This Picture—and That

1. In Letter **XLIX**, from K.H., dated August 5, 1881, we find the Mahatma responding to Mr. Sinnett's request to be allowed to possess his portrait. "Never had but one taken in my life," he replied, "a poor ferrotype produced in the days of the 'Gaudemus'—yet I may try—some day to get you one" (p. 285).
2. From an early but undated Blavatsky letter we learn that Olcott had sent a crayon drawing of Mahatma M. to the photographer's for reproduction, and that H.P.B. had afterwards sent a copy of it to Mr. Sinnett, not without reproaches for his curiosity in asking her "Boss" for it (*B.L.*, p. 8).
3. In Letter **LI**, from K.H., received August 22, '82, the Mahatma says that the "best of the two productions of D. Khool" is for Mr. Sinnett (p. 287). To this artistic effort there was an illuminating sequel.
4. In an early edition of *The Occult World* Mr. Sinnett had given the world an account of the

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

phenomenal production of portraits of K.H. In the two collections of Letters there are communications correcting his version of the occurrence; both writers supporting their criticisms by citing the evidence of the elusive chela Djual Kool, who had a reputation for artistic talent. It is impossible, from reading these strange and rather confused epistles, to attribute the results obtained with certainty to any one hand, for H.P.B., D.K. and Mahatma M. were all concerned in producing them. All we know is that H.P.B., on being teased to obtain a portrait of K.H., "said she would try", that blank sheets of paper were "left in the scrap book", that "something happened during lunch" and that an inferior portrait was at first precipitated. H.P.B. being dissatisfied with it—and she alone could judge of its correctness—a second and better attempt—"interfered with", however, by "M. Sahib"—came out (*B.L.*, p. 27; *M.L.*, p. 184, dated Autumn, 1882).

5. The qualified success of the experiment above mentioned resulted in a deep impression being made on the mind of one Colonel Chesney—not at the time a Theosophist, but in process of convincement. In consequence, the flattered chela begged permission "to *precipitate* another likeness", for presentation to the Colonel. "Of course the permission was granted," says K.H., "and the picture was ready three minutes after I had consented to it, and D.K. seemed enormously proud of it. He says—and he is right, I

The Mahatmas' Knowledge

think, that this likeness is the best of the three" (*M.L.*, p. 300).

A German Artist

6. In Letter LX, undated, but placed between others of 1883-4, and probably received in Europe, the Mahatma divines that his disciple Mr. Sinnett is "wandering about in a dark labyrinth of doubt" upon matters not clearly indicated. One of these doubts must have been in regard to the portraits, for the letter ends with this comforting observation: "I believe you are now satisfied with my portrait made by Herr Schmiechen and as dissatisfied with the one you have? Yet all are like in their way. Only while others are the productions of chelas, the last one was painted with M.'s hand on the artist's head, and often on his arm" (*M.L.*, p. 349).
7. From a late letter of H.P.B.'s, dated January 6, 1886, from Wurzburg, it appears that the German artist had made a replica, though not a perfectly exact one, of his first attempt. For H.P.B., in course of an apologetic argument, says, by way of illustration: "No painter can paint twice over the same likeness (See Schmiechen with his (Master's) portraits)" (*M.L.*, p. 480).

In the extracts given above we have pieced together the whole story of the "counterfeit presents" of the Mahatmas, so far as the two

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

collections of the Letters furnish us with material. We cannot say that it is a coherent story, or that, as a *catalogue raisonné* of the occult school of portraiture, it leads to any very definite conclusions. Accepting the account of the origin of the pictures, what has been their destination? We cannot hope to see again the "poor ferrotype" of K.H.'s student days, or the "crayon drawing" done by, or belonging to, Olcott. And since the first attempt on K.H. by Djual Kool was confessed "a failure", that, too, must be out of circulation. The second, which was completed in twenty-seven minutes, and would have been better if not "interfered with" by M., passed, nevertheless, into the hands of Mr. Sinnett, who in time grew dissatisfied with it. The third, of which the artist was "enormously proud", was done in three minutes, though what became of this occult masterpiece—"the best of the three"—we cannot say, for it was sent, by a not too trustworthy messenger, to Colonel Chesney. But bad, better and best were all "the productions of chelas"; Herr Schmiechen's were in a class by themselves. For did not Mahatma M. place his magnetic hand "on the artist's head, and often on his arm"?

From the fact that the two portraits of the Mahatmas which find a place in our pages are reduced from photographs obtained in Germany, and accepted as authentic (so far as we know) in Theosophical circles, we incline to the opinion that they would pass among the art experts of the movement as the work of Herr Schmiechen. And if the hand of M., placed on the artist's head, guaranteed

The Mahatmas' Knowledge

the correctness of K.H.'s portrait, would not K.H.'s hand, similarly employed, make authentic the portrait of his brother sage? We say this because the two portraits, judged by standards of draughtsmanship, seem to be the work of one hand, and to possess similar qualities and defects.

SECTION VI

THE FIRST EIGHT LETTERS

“The Occult World” Series Examined

IN the foregoing pages we have done our best to collect from scattered places all the narratives and features which might help to compose the Mahatmas into what one of them calls “thinkable entities”, and we now propose to leave the writers and come to their Letters.

It is impossible to give a detailed analysis of any group of Letters, or indeed of any single Letter, but it will be profitable to begin this Section with a brief abstract of Letter I, which is typical of the whole series. It is not dated by the writer, but was received at Simla about October 18, 1880. Madame Blavatsky says (*B.L.*, p. 11) that it was written at the Toling monastery in Tibet. The Letter was a reply to the last of three of Sinnett's of unknown date, and followed a conversation at Hume's (which the writer asserts he overheard) about the “Simla phenomena”.

Brief Abstract of Letter I

Letter I begins: “Esteemed Brother and Friend, Precisely because the test of the London newspaper would close the mouths of skeptics—it is unthinkable.” This sentence is explained by the fact that

The First Eight Letters

Mr. Sinnett, wishing to give the Western world "a staggering proof" of the Mahatma's existence and powers (of which he had been convinced by Madame Blavatsky's phenomena), had proposed as a test the "precipitation" in London of a copy of *The Pioneer* newspaper of India on the day of its publication. The proposed test was declined, and the Letter gives reasons why—even if successfully carried out—such a demonstration would fail to convince either the Western scientific mind or the general multitude.

As a typical representative of the materialist philosophy and rooted prejudice of the West, "Lord Verulam-Bacon" is exhumed; a personage not recognized, strictly speaking, by history or heraldry, for Francis Bacon parted with his surname when he became Baron Verulam. In addition to this incongruous title, the philosopher is credited with having helped to found the Royal Society in 1662, although he died in 1626. Doubtless this mistake is the source of the belief, still held in Theosophical Lodges, that Bacon was himself a "Master of the Wisdom", and lived far beyond the normal span of years, in spite of the witness of his tomb in St. Albans.

Literature and Logic

The last paragraph of the Letter embodies an important error, and is the keynote to a number of loose references to the Christian scriptures throughout the Letters. The passage not only betrays the writer's misreading of the New Testament text, but

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

also his indifference to the principles of proof; two points which are no light matters in controversy. Urging Mr. Sinnett to assert and publish what he has seen and known of Occultism, the Mahatma gives what he believes to have been the sole basis in evidence for the Christian faith: "Remember that there was but one hysterical woman alleged to have been present at the pretended ascension. . . . Yet for nearly 2,000 years countless milliards have pinned their faith upon the testimony of that one woman—and she not over trustworthy" (p. 5).

The word "ascension" is used above in mistake for "resurrection", which occurrence (the writer forgets) not even "one hysterical woman" is said in the records to have actually witnessed. As to the "ascension", the witnesses to it (the Mahatma should have known) are said to have been a considerable number.

Therefore upon the basis of the supposed Christian precedent of the triumph of one woman's personal assurance over commonly accepted concepts of natural law, the Mahatma urges Mr. Sinnett to make the most of the signs and wonders granted to him, and to build upon his bare assertion of these trivial phenomena a world-wide belief in the existence of the Mahatmas and the truth of their Occult philosophy.

The least that one can say of this Letter is that the beginning and the end of it are somewhat contradictory. A public that would not believe though one brought a copy of *The Pioneer* to London wet from the Indian press, is expected to "digest"

The First Eight Letters

the stories “of the production of the note, the cup and the sundry experiments with cigarette papers” (p. 5), and make them the basis of a revolution in religion, science and philosophy.

The range of knowledge claimed in the Letter is such as the experience of human nature for “long centuries, aye, ages” has taught the writer, but its pages do not show any verifiable facts that could not be collected by diligent reading in the proper quarters. Apart, also, from the textual and logical faults already mentioned, the Letter contains a large number of errors in fact, spelling and punctuation.

A Vision, a Voice and an Avalanche

The rest of the Letters in the “Occult” series contain little matter of exactly that description compared with a high proportion dealing with Theosophical policy and personal criticism. Letter IIIA, however, is an exception; it is headed by Mr. Sinnett with a curious note: “I saw K.H. in astral form on the night of 19th of October 1880.” He also saw “another of the Brothers” whom he did not know. Colonel Olcott afterwards told him this was “Serapis”—“the youngest of the chohans” (p. 10). Since Mr. Sinnett did not know “Serapis” at first sight, how did he know K.H. at first sight, who—by the way—had quickly made an exception to a *Rule*, just notified, against crossing the thresholds of flesh-eating, wine-drinking and unpledged disciples?

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Letter IV is written in India, and is one of the few dated documents to which the Mahatmas have put their hands. K.H. writes: "The other day as I was coming down the defiles of Kouenlun—Karakorum you call them—I saw an avalanche tumble. I had gone personally to our chief—and was crossing over to Lhadak on my way home." During the "awful stillness which usually follows such a cataclysm—a familiar voice—shouted along the currents 'Olcott has raised the very devil again! The Englishmen are going crazy. Koot Hoomi, *come quicker* and help me'." It was a psychological "telegram" from the "old lady" (Madame Blavatsky). "So I determined," he goes on, "to emerge from the seclusion of many years and spend some time with her and comfort her as well as I could." In a few days in India, unfortunately, he heard and saw among his own countrymen too many things discomforting for himself—drunkenness, declamation "against *Yog Vidya* and Theosophy, as a delusion and a lie," and blank scepticism of phenomena! "I turn my face homeward to-morrow" (p. 12). Poor comfort this for Madame Blavatsky, that her Master should make haste to cross the frontier on a healing errand, and be turned from his purpose by the adverse conditions which his patient and pupil has to endure. Strange, moreover, that a Master who had heard an imperative call when "coming down the defiles of the Kouenlun", should have been deaf to it when within a railway journey of his objective. We are also entitled to ask why he found "the

The First Eight Letters

stifling magnetism" of India so overpowering on October 29th, seeing that (as stated in Letters III^a and III^b) he had been astrally present to Mr. Sinnett on the 19th and Madame Blavatsky on the 20th of the same month for the purpose of carrying out the "brooch" phenomenon?

Apart from the points just mentioned, the topography of the avalanche story is somewhat confused.* The mountains of "Kouenlun (or K'uenlun) lie to the north between Mongolia and Tibet, and we do not call them "Karakorum". We use that name for a range in Kashmir (India) which runs parallel to the western part of the bigger northern range. We believe the law of contradiction holds good on the "Roof of the World" as everywhere else; therefore, if the avalanche was in K'uenlun it was not in Karakoram; and if in Karakoram it was not in K'uenlun. For ourselves, we lean to Karakoram, because from there the Mahatma could "cross over into Lhadak" (still in India) on his "way home" to Tibet; from K'uenlun he could not, unless his home is in India, which surely it is not!

Tampering with the Mails

Letter v introduces us to an occult facility of the Mahatmas for the hastening of the "outward mail", if we may call it so, to Tibet, or wherever the addressee may be staying at the time. It is called *osmosis*, a term borrowed from biology, where it is

* See map facing p. 36.



MAHATMA MORYA

From a Drawing attributed to a German Artist, Herr Schmiechen

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

used to describe a phenomenon constantly taking place in animal and vegetable bodies. The rising of sap against the action of gravity in trees and plants is called by this term, which, by a curious analogy, the Mahatma employs for the abstraction from their envelopes of letters addressed to him while they are in the post. "I have your letter of Nov. 19th, abstracted by our special *osmosis* from the envelope at Meerut, and yours to our 'old lady' in its half empty registered shell safely sent on to Cawnpore, to make her swear at me. But she is too weak to play at the astral postman just now" (p. 17).

Enter Master Morya

Letter VII intimates that Mr. Sinnett, by his loyalty to the Cause, has "thereby won a friend—one, far higher and better than myself—he belongs to the 'Foreign Section'." This new friend is none other than Mahatma Morya, whose cosmos-grasping mind will enter the correspondence in our Philosophical Section with the two great Letters on cyclic and human evolution. Meanwhile K.H. warns his pupil against seeking signs. "Ask for no phenomena for a while, as it is but such paltry manifestations which now stand in your way" (p. 26).

Letter VIII is a long, rambling, exculpatory and sentimental document. "You understand, do you not, that it is no fault of mine if I *cannot* meet you as I would?" And "direct communication . . . would be conceded at once, did it depend but of

The First Eight Letters

me alone" (p. 27). The truth must be said, "the Chiefs" are adamant. Why? Since they never give reasons, K.H. furnishes pages full of the best he can think of. One is that Colonel Olcott, though a founder, never has "tangible visits". Why, then, should Mr. Sinnett expect them? Moreover, to make good his inability to set up direct communication, K.H. goes into the very technique of transcendental acoustics, "to confound your physicists" who are unacquainted with "the occult powers of air (akas)" (p. 29).

Universal Brotherhood

Two other matters must be mentioned before we leave *The Occult World* Section. One is the growing heat and unpleasing nature of the personal criticisms in the Letters, and the other, a more agreeable one, is the frequent plea for the idea of a "Universal Brotherhood". There is much talk of starting an Anglo-Indian Branch of the Theosophical Society, for which a "Charter" is very nearly forthcoming. But the thing that is said to be nearest the Mahatma's heart is the Brotherhood. "You have ever discussed but to put down the idea of a universal Brotherhood. . . . This, my respected and esteemed friend and Brother—will never do! (p. 8). "The new society, if formed at all, must contribute to the vitality of the Parent body" by promoting its leading idea of a "Universal Brotherhood" (p. 9). "The Chiefs want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity', a real Universal

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Fraternity started”—“where all will become co-workers of nature, will work for the good of mankind *with* and *through* the higher *planetary Spirits*—the only ‘Spirits’ we believe in”. A concluding paragraph in Letter vi contains the words: “Plato was right: *ideas rule the world*” (pp. 23–24).

“Plato was right.” Here our review of *The Occult World* series must needs stop, for in these words we think we scent the morning air of Philosophy, which announces that we have arrived at Section II of *The Mahatma Letters*, and the first of the sixteen important communications it contains.

PART II
THE INVESTIGATION

SECTION VII

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SECTION

Substance and Accident

THE second part of our book is divided into eight sections, the first four of which treat of the philosophical and doctrinal contents of the Letters; the fifth shows their style, and the remaining three examine the theories advanced as to the manner of their production.

Considering what is the main motive of our writing, and the definite quest that lies before us, we do not think we are obliged to give a substantial exposition of the philosophy of the Letters. For this there are at least three good reasons. First, because the Mahatmas themselves did not attempt such an exposition, but left to Mr. Sinnett the task of editing a series of private and discursive communications, and building them into an intelligible system. Second, because larger and more authoritative works have in later years been added to the Theosophical Canon; and third, because even though we might produce a philosophic statement that would do the Mahatmas some credit, we feel that the answer to the question on our title-page does not depend on our knowing what the Mahatmas wrote most about, but rather on the smaller and less deliberate disclosures made in the writings. In this opinion an authority no

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

less eminent than Francis Bacon would support us; for in his *Advancement of Learning* he says: "It cometh often to pass that mean and small things discover great, better than great can discover small."

"Esoteric Buddhism"

But whether we seek to discover great things or small, we do not pretend that a task will be easy for us which occupied the trained mind of the editor of *The Pioneer of India* for nearly two years, while the Letters on philosophy came pouring in from the pens of the voluble Mahatmas. The fruit of these labours—*Esoteric Buddhism*—was the second of Mr. Sinnett's books, and the third Theosophical classic; the following references to its origins and the changing estimates passed upon it will show that the writer, though ever in his Tibetan task-master's eye, was not always in his good opinions.

"Writing a new book, or for the *Theosophist*?" asks K.H. in Letter xxv, the last of the series classified by the editor as "Philosophical". "Well, do you not think that . . . you had better write the former as well as for the latter? . . . *Esoteric Buddhism*—an excellent title by the bye" (p. 201).

"Some Vital Errors"

Eight months later, in October, 1883, the Mahatma writes: "You have heard of the step H.P.B. was permitted to take?" (Madame B. was, we believe, retiring.) "A fearful responsibility is cast upon Mr.

The Philosophical Section

Olcott; a still greater—owing to the *O.W.* and *Esot. Buddhism*—upon you. . . . Your Karma, good friend, this time” (p. 323). Evidently Mr. Sinnett, in giving these two books to the world, was held to have cast occult pearls before swine, “desecrated the Masters”, and brought ridicule upon the Theosophical Society, or made some other but not specified mistakes. Still, it must have been consoling for him to be told, six months later, that “no one, so far, has noticed the real vital errors in *Esoteric Buddhism* . . . nor are they likely to” (p. 357). We admire this loyalty of an omniscient Master to an erring pupil, but would it not have been better in the end to have corrected rather than consoled him in regard to “real vital errors”? But apparently Mahatma’s ways are as far from our ways as the East is from the West, for in another Letter we learn that K.H. had allowed *a woman Chela* to write a book called *Man*, and “had to leave her under her self-delusion that this new book was written with the view of ‘correcting the mistakes of *Esoteric Buddhism*’ (—of killing it—was the true thought)” (p. 361). An astonishing piece of gossip this, coming from the pen of a Master of the Wisdom! Still, *who writes last writes best*—if we may vary the proverb—for Mr. Sinnett and *a man Chela* were allowed to “look over” the woman writer’s *Man*, and erase from it *her* mistakes! We wonder what explanation the Mahatma gave of this curious and humorous proceeding to the authoress of *Man*.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

“The Only Right Exposition”

Two more Letters having reference to *Esoteric Buddhism* must be quoted, both showing the book restored to favour; one is from K.H. and the other from H.P.B. In a Letter marked *Strictly Confidential*, dealing for the most part with Indian political affairs, the Mahatma thinks it a fit occasion to confirm his testimony to the seeming soundness of his pupil's work. “With a few undetectable mistakes and omissions notwithstanding, your *Esoteric Buddhism* is the only right exposition—however incomplete—of our Occult doctrines” (p. 392).

In the last Letter but one from H.P.B. (*M.L.*, p. 481), the retired founder, hard at work on *The Secret Doctrine*, employs the Master's strange metaphor of “book-killing”. The new work “will be 20 times as learned, philosophical and better than *Isis* which will be *killed* by it.” She goes on to say: “The extreme lucidity of *Esoteric Buddhism* will also be shown and its doctrines proven correct mathematically, geometrically, logically and scientifically.”*

Theosophy without “Theos”

The foregoing episode in Theosophical history has been recalled to show the doctrinal position to which the Society had been committed by the

* This promise was not exactly fulfilled. “*Esoteric Buddhism*,” says H.P.B. in the Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine*, “was an excellent work with a very unfortunate title”—a reversal of the Mahatma's commendation: “An excellent title, by the bye.”

The Philosophical Section

events and revelations of the years 1880 to 1883. First, the Simla phenomena—"the production of the note, the cup and the sundry experiments with cigarette papers"—had resulted in the conviction of Mr. Sinnett of the existence of the Tibetan Brothers, and the writing of *The Occult World*. Then from these freshly opened but a little suspected oracles came later the new philosophy, which, to the surprise of many adherents in India and England, proved to be a diluted form of Buddhism, something like old wine in new bottles. Hence the significance of the compliment paid to Mr. Sinnett by the revealing Mahatma himself when the new book was nearing its completion. "*Esoteric Buddhism*—an excellent title by the bye." Yes; excellent for Buddhists to have the burdensome "Theos"—which had no place in their system—put down from its seat, but embarrassing for Christians and other Theists in the Society to find "spiritual monads" and "Dhyan Chohans" exalted in its stead. This the events of succeeding years proved in crisis after crisis, while the anomalous "Theos" remained emblazoned on the Society's banner.

Theosophia: the Word and the Doctrine

In order to appreciate the significance of the formal committal of the Theosophical Society in 1883 to doctrines said to be Buddhistic, it will be well to take advantage of the historical juncture just reached to make a brief review of the original and fundamental Theosophical idea.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Theos means "God" and *sophia* means "wisdom", and the two together make the compound *Theosophia*, generally translated "Divine wisdom". This wisdom, when first held to be present in the mind of man, was considered to be a mystical experience, not an intellectual acquirement. Moreover, it was not presumed as a general human possession, but was noted as a rare and inconstant occurrence. Nevertheless, in a case where it was rightly claimed, "Divine wisdom" was necessarily direct and authoritative.

Most writers admit that Ammonius Saccas of Alexandria (A.D. 200) was the first teacher of the Theosophical doctrine, but Porphyrius the Neo-Platonist (A.D. 270) is in fact the first recorded user of the word. Eusebius says of him that his "collection of oracles" was written "to encourage the study of that wisdom which he called *Theosophia*" (*Praep. Ev. IV*, 6, p. 144). Thenceforward the idea of *Theosophia*, as an attainment due to the proper direction of the mind towards its spiritual object, ran through Neo-Platonism, and in time it entered the Christian Church. In later centuries men and women arose who claimed to be "wise in the things of God" by internal communication. Nevertheless the word *Theosophia* gradually passed out of use, and the experience it designated became more and more suspect by the authorities of the Church.

The word *Theosophia* returned to use during the Renaissance, and occurred in the alchemical writings of Paracelsus (1540), the sermons of Eckhart, and the mystical treatises of Jacob Boehme

The Philosophical Section

(see his *Of 177 Theosophic Questions*, 1624). The present Pope bears, among other titles, one of "Doctor of Theosophy", and Swedenborg, the visionary, is classed as a Theosophist in Schaff-Herzog's *Encyclopaedia*.

Theosophy's Star in the West

Of mystical Theosophy little or nothing was known in Europe during the nineteenth century outside the pages of dictionaries and encyclopaedias. Hence it is hardly probable that the foundation in New York of the Theosophical Society by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in 1875 represented the re-emergence of the old Nile water from some deep meanders under land and sea. Apart from its name, the new Society derived nothing from Alexandrian sources, and if its declared objects were an interpretation of its name, these would indicate only the meaning the word "Theosophical" then and there carried in the minds of the founders and the general public. The objects of the Society were these:

1. To form a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, or colour.
2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

It is clear from these objects that Theosophy in this, its second historical phase, was not a mystical cult, but a scientific, literary and ethical pursuit.

Isis Veiled and Unveiled

The first literary achievement of the combined talents of the Theosophical founders was the production in 1877 of the book *Isis Unveiled*, which went to Egypt for its title, though not to that country more than to any other for the body of its doctrine. Consequently it did not "unveil" its titular goddess in any special manner. The book was attributed to Madame Blavatsky as its author, dedicated by her to the Theosophical Society, and issued in its name as a definite challenge to the religious and scientific teachers of the world. Its main proposition was that all varieties of religion and science were one in substance, and traceable to a common origin called "The Wisdom Religion". Moreover, the central religious doctrine of *Isis Unveiled* (if words have a definite meaning) was in character *Theistic*. To this the following sentences from its Preface testify: (1) "They [the Oriental Adepts] showed us that by combining Science with Religion, the existence of God and the immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid"; (2) "*Ex nihilo nihil fit*: prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God" (p. xii).

It must, however, be clear from the review just made that the compendium of religion and science

The Philosophical Section

offered to the world in 1877 from New York, even if it had in it any element of "God-wisdom", was not and did not pretend to be identical with the *Theosophia* claimed by Porphyrius as his mystical possession. Something divine had passed from the meaning of the word and the conception of the thing in the intervening time, and much that was human had come into them.

Theosophy's Old Testament Rejected

Isis Unveiled was the sole Theosophical scripture from 1877 until the Mahatma Letters appeared in fragmentary and abstract form in *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*. It is therefore of interest to learn for what reasons and in what particulars the older revelation was superseded by the new. We shall avoid offering an opinion of our own upon the doctrine of this colossal book of 1,200 pages; but since Mr. Sinnett makes a few explanations of the genesis of *Isis*, and Madame Blavatsky and others give more startling particulars as to its composition, we may briefly indicate what these are. The most significant fact with regard to the work is the assertion on all hands, as well as in its own pages, that it was composed by direction of and with the assistance of the Masters—"The sages of the Orient". Much of it, according to Madame Blavatsky, was passed before her eyes in manuscript or written during her sleep. There is ground for believing, in any case, that in producing the book the author had professional editorial assistance

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

from a certain Dr. Wilder; while the Mahatmas themselves say in the Letters that Colonel Olcott lent a by no means improving hand.

The Mahatmas' Criticisms

Of *Isis* as a literary compendium of religious and scientific information, we will only say that it seems to us an exceedingly ill-constructed work, which for the most part makes dreary and unedifying reading. No judgment that we could pass on it, however, were we minded to make one, would equal the disparagement meted out to it at almost every mention by the Mahatmas, who, as just said, were credited with having directed and supervised its composition. “‘You will write so and so, give *so far*, and no more’ . . . she was constantly told by us when writing her book” (*M.L.*, p. 289).

Here is a list of the Mahatmas’ criticisms: “*Isis*,” emanating from a woman, “could never hope for a serious hearing” (p. 50). “By the bye you must not trust *Isis* literally,” says K.H. on p. 45, where “a few real mistakes” and a bad printer’s error are admitted. On p. 121 he says “*Isis* was *not* unveiled.” The book was called “a tentative effort”; admitted to be in parts “much jumbled, and confused by Olcott, who thought he was improving it”! (p. 75); said to be “very clumsily expressed”, “hardly sketched—nothing completed or fully revealed” (p. 131); “confused and tortured” (p. 173); “contradictory” and “purposely veiled” (pp. 289-90); and in need of being

The Philosophical Section

rewritten "for the sake of the family honour" (p. 130). Lastly, it was called by the Mahatma himself a "curry of quotations from various philosophic and esoteric truths" (p. 121), and by Colonel Olcott "a sort of literary rag-bag with contents all higgledy-piggledy" (*B.L.*, p. 326).

It is not for us to say whether the criticisms here collected are just to the first great work of Madame Blavatsky. At least they seem to indicate that the hour had struck for the close of the second and the opening of a third dispensation in Theosophy. Although *Isis Unveiled*, in accordance with the second Theosophical "object", as this was understood at the time it was written, had made a review of all the religions and sciences of the world, it showed a definite bias away from Christianity, and a movement by almost imperceptible stages towards the faiths of India, China, Mongolia and Tibet, at which last place its Eastward-going star rested. Then, with a few dark hints and tantalizing personal touches, it closed on the scene the curtain of mystery. It was from this trans-Himâlayan tabernacle, if we are to believe the records, that *The Mahatma Letters* in due time came forth.

SECTION VIII

PERSONALITY AND PHILOSOPHY

THE Philosophy of the Mahatma Letters was not presented to its first readers in a very formal manner; perhaps for the reason that it was agreed that the new revelation should first run an experimental course in *The Theosophist* magazine, and then be finally built into a system in the "new book". Hence though the "finds" of philosophic ore are sometimes very rich, they are presented in a crude and casual manner, and left embedded in heaps of earthy personalities, which, though sometimes intended to be entertaining, hinder the intellectual march.

Madame Blavatsky is herself the subject of frequent digressions of this personal character. Her bodily ailments are diagnosed and her defects of temperament come under strong but not too damaging comment. "We have nothing against the old woman with the exception that she *is* one" (p. 428) is an affectionate touch, which nevertheless is typical of a strain of anti-feminism that runs through the Letters.* Of the founder's associates in India—among them Colonel Olcott, Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Hume—not one altogether escapes the lash, while the chiefs of Theosophy and Spiritualism in England are unsparingly castigated for any scepticism or independence of mind which they show on the Mahatmic theme.

* See Section xv, *The Mahatmas' Anti-Feminism*.

Personality and Philosophy

The Mahatma's Curiosity

Mr. Sinnett having gone to Europe to bring out *The Occult World*, the correspondence rested for a few months, except for a couple of gossipy pages in Letter xxxi (properly No. ix)—sent “from the abodes of eternal snow and purity” to “the abodes of vice” (p. 240). Herein the Mahatma K.H. admits the lack of system in his writings, and almost apologizes for it to his highly trained journalistic friend. “Pardon me. I write but seldom letters; and whenever compelled to do so follow rather my own thoughts than strictly hold to the subject I ought to have in view” (p. 241). This confession—which confirms our observation just made—lies between an outburst on the “universal Spiritual Essense of Nature” and a rather curious personal inquiry: “And now that you have met the ‘mystics’ of Paris and London, what do you think of them?” (p. 242).

It is evident that Mr. Sinnett wrote back to Tibet via Bombay as much in the personal as in the philosophic vein, for the Mahatma’s Letter ix, written at leisure in the Lamasery to await his pupil’s return to India, fills fourteen pages, eight of which are occupied with personal themes. These swift summaries of the characters and conditions of Mr. Sinnett’s Theosophical associates show their writer to possess an extraordinary insight, a crowded memory, and a command of Western vernacular that many a practised penman would envy. They help, moreover, to build up an historical background

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

to the otherwise dateless, abstract and oracular Letters.

"Our old lady is weak and her nerves are worked to a fiddle-string; so is her jaded brain," writes the Mahatma. H. S. Olcott, the other founder, is rusticiating, we think, in Ceylon, "fighting his way back to salvation", after some unnamed journalistic "indiscretions".

"Mr. Hume . . . now preserves a kind of armed neutrality wondrous to behold. Having made the mirific discovery that we are a *body* of antidiluvian Jesuits of fossiles—self-crowned with oratorial flourishes". . . . "Verily has our very intellectual, once mutual friend, a flood of words at his command which would suffice to float a troopship of oratorious fallacies. Nevertheless—I respect him" (p. 39).

"But who next?" No; why should we plough through these personalities from A to Z, and keep Philosophy waiting? "You doubt? Listen." No; we are ready to believe, if it will spare us the listening to more strictures—even though well-deserved—on four famous Theosophists and Spiritualists who have since passed on. We have often enough heard of pupils carrying tales and grievances to their masters, but we do not know what to make of this instance of the reverse process. The compensating utility of these personalities is apparent, however, when they serve as hooks for weightier matters to hang on; when the Mahatma, instead of hitching his wagon to a star, hitches his star to a wagon—as, for instance, in his sudden incan-

Personality and Philosophy

descence upon the subject of “Planetary Spirits” in the midst of a paragraph directed against Mr. Stainton Moses. We condense the sentences a little.

“Planetary Spirits appear on Earth only at the beginning of every *new* human kind, at the junction of, and close of the two ends of the great cycle. They remain with man no longer than the time required for the truths they have to teach to impress themselves so forcibly upon the plastic mind of the new races as to warrant them from being forgotten in ages hereafter”. . . . “The mission of the Planetary Spirit is but to strike the KEY-NOTE OF TRUTH” . . . which having run its course “along the catenation of that race”, the high Spirit disappears “till the following ‘resurrection of flesh’. The vibrations of the Primitive Truth are what your philosophers name ‘innate ideas’ ” (p. 41).

“But to your question—may a Planetary Spirit have been humanly incarnated?” The answer is in the affirmative; none of them can have been other than human. “When Buddha”, while living on earth, “first reached Nirvana, he became a Planetary Spirit,” able to “rove the interstellar spaces *in full consciousness*” in his own body. But this is a rare gift, and is the highest that man can hope for on our planet; “the last Khobilgan who reached it being Sang-Ko-Pa of Kokonor (xiv century) the reformer of esoteric as well as of vulgar Lamaism” (p. 43).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Spirits of the Departed

A certain G.H.F. had speculated that "every diamond, every crystal, every plant and star has its own individual soul, besides man and animal"—and that "there is a hierarchy of souls from the lowest forms of matter up to the World Soul". It was a good shot. "You are right" (said K.H., as he tells us), "but, you are mistaken when adding . . . that 'the spirits of the departed hold *direct* psychic communication with Souls that are still connected with a human body'—for, they do not." This was a bad shot on the part of G.H.F. "They *cannot* if even they would span the abyss that separates their worlds from ours." They can be visited in Spirit, they cannot visit us; they attract, but cannot be attracted, "their Spiritual polarity being an insuperable difficulty in the way" (p. 45). K.H. will explain this more clearly in dealing with "The Great Cycle". We still condense his sentences a little.

The Great Cycle

The cycle of intelligent existences commences on the most spiritually perfect planet. Man evolves from the primeval cosmic matter (*akasa*) at the threshold of Eternity as an *Etherial*—not a Spiritual entity. "He is but one remove from the universal and Spiritual World Essence—the *Anima Mundi* of the Greeks" (p. 45).

The congeries of star-worlds may be likened to

Personality and Philosophy

a chain of worlds inter-linked together. The progress of man throughout the whole is called the “Great Cycle”, its “head is lost in a crown of absolute Spirit, and its lowest point of circumference in absolute matter” (p. 46).

In the Great Cycle there are smaller cycles, and each star-world has its own cycle of evolution, from a purer to a grosser nature; at the “antipodes” it is absolute matter (p. 46).

Returning to the Planetary Spirit. Propelled by cyclic impulse, he has to descend before he can ascend. On his way he has to pass through the whole ladder of evolution, missing no rung, to halt at every star-world as he would at a station, and perform in it his own “life cycle” (p. 46).

The Septenary System

The two Letters just noticed (xxxi and ix) do not carry us very far into the Mahatmas’ system of Philosophy. It is true there is a reference (p. 46) to the doctrine of Reincarnation (which we shall discuss in another Section), but it is in Letter xi, from K.H. to Mr. Hume, that a more fundamental matter is foreshadowed, when a hint is given as to the evolution of “the Pythagorean monad” upwards to “the sacred seven” (p. 63). Here, in the words “monad” and “seven” we have the twin keys to the Occult Philosophy, the disclosure of which is begun in Letter xiii, where Mahatma Morya answers the cosmological queries of Mr. Sinnett.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Although we have said that the formulation of the Philosophy may have little direct bearing on the problem of the authorship of the Letters, we propose, as a matter of interest, to add to this Section an outline of it sufficiently definite for comprehension, supported by a selection from those passages in the text from which it is drawn.

The Numerical Structure of the Universe

The first principle of the Philosophy is the unity and eternity of a primordial Essence, neither spirit nor matter alone, nor both compounded, but “the one element for which the English has no name” (p. 60). “The one element not only fills space and is space, but interpenetrates every atom of cosmic matter” (p. 97). In the constitution of the Universe this Essence has seven aspects, to which, in number and nature, the constitution of man corresponds. In its structure the Universe is subject to “the septenary rule”; worlds and chains of worlds conforming to the disposition of this numerical force, and the lives of races and of individual men similarly coming under its sway. Esoteric Science does not recognize the “four elements” and “three kingdoms” of the Western schools, but affirms the existence of seven elements and seven kingdoms. Time itself bows down to the “sacred seven”, and all the periods of all life—whether of universes, globes, men, or the atoms of men’s bodies—exhibit the same numerical recurrence.

Personality and Philosophy

Cosmological Queries Answered

The following are a few of the passages, in Letters XIII to XVIII, which support the propositions outlined above.

1. "Realize but once the process of the *maha* cycle, of one sphere and you have realized them all. One man is born like another man, one race evolves, develops and declines like another and all other races. Nature follows the same groove from the 'creation' of a universe down to that of a mosquito" (p. 70).
2. Worlds have, "like men their seven principles which develop and grow simultaneously with the body" (p. 71).
3. "The evolution of the worlds cannot be considered apart from the evolution of everything created" (p. 72). "Besides which, every kingdom (and we have seven—while you have but three) is subdivided into *seven* degrees or classes" (p. 73).
4. "All is one law. Man has his seven principles, the germs of which he brings with him at his birth. So has a planet or a world" (p. 76).
5. "There are seven objective and seven subjective globes (I have been just permitted for the first time to give you the right figure), the worlds of causes and of effects" (p. 78). "The 'Septenary' doctrine had not yet been divulged to the world at the time when *Isis* was written" (p. 183).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

6. Even the monad passing from the mineral to the vegetable state has to keep to the septenary rule. "Having passed through its seven great classes of inmetalliation (a good word this) with their septenary ramifications—the monad gives birth to the vegetable kingdom and moves on to the next planet B" (p. 79).
7. "He has to perform seven rings through seven races (one in each) and seven multiplied by seven offshoots. . . . To set you right so far I will say—one life in each of the seven root-races; seven lives in each of the 49 sub-races—or $7 \times 7 \times 7 = 343$ and add 7 more. And then a series of lives in offshoot and branchlet races; making the total incarnations of man in each station or planet 777" (p. 83).
8. "As man is a seven-fold being so is the universe—the septenary microcosm being to the septenary macrocosm but as the drop of rain water is to the cloud from whence it dropped and whither in the course of time it will return" (p. 91).
9. "The degrees of an Adept's initiation mark the seven stages at which he discovers the secret of the sevenfold principles in nature and man and awakens his dormant powers" (p. 99).
10. "Every Spiritual Individuality has a gigantic evolutionary journey to perform. . . . First—at the beginning of the great Mahamanvantaric rotation, from first to last of the man-bearing planets, as on each of them, the monad has to pass through seven successive races of

Personality and Philosophy

man. . . . Each of the seven races send seven ramifying branchlets from the Parent Branch; and through each of these in turn man has to evolute before he passes on to the next higher race; and that—*seven times*” (p. 119).

The Denial of God

Having given above the affirmative principles of the Mahatmas’ Philosophy, we must include in this Section the statement of their fundamental negation, that is, the denial of the existence of a divine creator and sustainer of the Universe. In this respect, of course, they are not peculiar among philosophers, but at least it may be said that they are unique in having been at the same time the trusted guides of a Society of “Theosophists”.

Pronouncements contrary to the theistic idea are of frequent occurrence in the Letters, and when directed against particular persons or religions they are as often expressed in abusive as in argumentative terms. Of the receivers of the Letters, Mr. A. O. Hume (who has already been mentioned in this Section as the subject of caustic personal comment) seems to have been the more disputatious of the two, and sceptical of his Master’s knowledge and authority. Proposing to publish in his own name an exposition of the Occult Philosophy, he wrote and sent for his Master’s approval a preliminary chapter headed “God”, to which essay K.H. replied in notes now constituting Letter x. Here follow a few of its more salient passages:

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

"Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God, least of all in one whose pronoun necessitates a capital H. . . . Our doctrine knows no compromises. It neither affirms or denies, for it never teaches but that which it knows to be the truth. Therefore we deny God both as philosophers and as Buddhists. . . . We know there are planetary and other spiritual lives, and we know there is in our system no such thing as God, either personal or impersonal" (p. 52).

"We refuse to admit a being or an existence of which we know absolutely nothing, because there is no room for him in the presence of that matter whose undeniable properties and qualities we know thoroughly well" (p. 55).

"The existence of matter, then, is a fact; the existence of motion is another fact, their self-existence and eternity or indestructibility is a third fact. And the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence—give it whatever name you will—is a chimera, a gigantic absurdity" (p. 56).

Universal Monarchy or Democracy

So as not to take leave of the Mahatmas' philosophy in its purely negative mode, let us conclude this Section with a brief summary of the teaching as it finds expression in more positive terms.

The Mahatmas argue that in rejecting the concept of a divine creator, ruler and judge of the Universe, they are not making void the essential seat of government in the cosmos, but are affirming

Personality and Philosophy

the existence of a real cosmic "Democracy" instead of an illusory "Monarchy". For since the macrocosm is known to be represented in the microcosm, the necessary functions usually vested in a God are actually distributed through all orders of being, from the highest to the lowest. Therefore every being that knows this is his own God.

There is no need for a creator or sustainer of the material universe, for matter exists from eternity in perfect equilibrium, and its origination and annihilation are alike impossible. Also, for all the stages of the modification of matter, adequate powers are inherent in the highest orders of beings—the Dhyan Chohans and Planetary Spirits—and their aggregate, the Universal Mind. Lastly, Karma as the law of Nature is a sufficient surety for justice.

Perpetual Motion

"Then what do we believe in? . . . we believe in matter alone, in matter as visible nature and matter in its invisibility as the invisible omnipresent omnipotent Proteus with its unceasing motion which is its life, and which nature draws from herself since she is the great whole outside of which nothing can exist" (p. 56).

"We say and affirm that motion—the universal perpetual motion which never ceases, never slackens nor increases its speed but goes on like a mill set in motion, whether it has anything to grind or not—we say this perpetual motion is the only eternal and uncreated Deity we are able to recognize" (p. 138).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

"And we maintain that wherever there is life and being, and in however much spiritualized a form, there is no room for moral government, much less for a moral Governor" (p. 139).

Since it is held that there is in the Universe no spirit entitled to the name of "God" and deserving of the trust and service of men, there cannot in reason be any true religion, as religions are commonly understood. Hence it is no wonder that the Mahatma dismisses, as illusions and curses, "religion under whatever form and in whatever nation, the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches" (p. 57).

SECTION IX

REINCARNATION MISUNDERSTOOD

THE course of life outlined in the previous Section has been shown to be beset with many changes, not only of place and time, but in the very nature of the pilgrim monad itself. The disclosure of its periods of encasement in mineral, vegetable and animal forms involved the invention of the words “inmetalliation”, “inherbation” and “zoonization”; the first of which was evidently the coinage of Mr. Sinnett’s brain, and the last of the Mahatma’s. The word denoting the encasement of a spirit in human flesh—“incarnation”—was, however, of more ancient lineage, and was ready to the hand of the Mahatma when the cosmic system was being unfolded. True, it had been formerly employed in a theological connection, but as this was not its only possible meaning, it had been adopted and modified by the prefix “re” to denote a series of encasements in flesh, or rebirths in human form. As such it was certainly in use prior to the issue of *Isis Unveiled*, and doubtless the adherents of that doctrine in Europe and America were the people therein alluded to and opposed by Madame Blavatsky as “the Reincarnationists”. We have now to examine the references to the doctrine of Reincarnation in the Letters: needless to say not with a view to the discussion of its truth, but rather as an inquiry into the history of the disclosure of the idea.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters ?

The Doctrine First Mentioned

Following the reference made in Letter IX (p. 46) to "life cycles", the Mahatma mentions for the first time the subject of Reincarnation, but this he does in such a casual manner that it is hard to believe he is propounding the doctrine that in later years became so vital to his scheme. Reincarnation is not here stated to be a normal fact in the life of every spirit; it is only a compensating opportunity offered in cases where the spirit "fails to complete his round of life in it", or "as he dies on it before reaching the age of reason, as correctly stated in *Isis*". Up to this point in the correspondence the Mahatma has been silent on any other or larger understanding of the term, but he immediately adds: "Thus far Mrs. Kingsford's idea that the human Ego is being reincarnated in several successive human bodies is the true one"—though this lady is said to be wrong about its rebirth in animal forms. Since Mrs. Kingsford's idea is said to be "thus far the true one", we take it the Mahatma is in agreement with her; let us hear what he has to say as to her partial error.

"This is what happens." When the Spirit-man, after circling along the arc of the cycle, reaches our planet, he has lost some of his ethereal, and acquired an increase of material nature. Indeed, the two natures will be "pretty much equilibrated in him". But matter will in time so stifle spirit that the once pure Planetary Spirit will dwindle to a primordial man in primordial conditions. Thenceforward his

Reincarnation Misunderstood

redundant matter will be divorced from spirit, and pass into mineral, vegetable and primitive animal forms. In these natural mills it is ground to powder and proceeds "soulless back to its Mother Fount; while the *Egos* purified of their dross are enabled to resume their progress once more onward". Hence it is *matter*, not *spirit*, which descends as dross into mineral, vegetable and primitive animal forms; as to "the Spiritual Ego, he will ascend from star to star, from one world to another, circling onward to re-become the once pure planetary Spirit, then higher still, to finally reach its first starting point, and from thence—to merge into *mystery*" (p. 47).

The Mahatmas Forestalled

Presuming the truth of the correction just made, we must return to the consideration of "Mrs. Kingsford's idea". Who, we may be asked, is this lady, and whence has she the apparent priority in the utterance of this idea, and liberty to offer an interpretation of it different from the Mahatma's? She is the gifted visionary of the "Hermetic" school, who not only taught the doctrine of rebirth, but claimed ability to recover the knowledge of her own past lives. In conjunction with Mr. Edward Maitland she delivered in London a series of private lectures in the summer of 1881, which were published early in 1882, under the title of *The Perfect Way*. It is clear, therefore, that at the time the Letter we are now considering was written, "Mrs.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Kingsford's idea" had not long come to the Mahatma's knowledge.

Mrs. Kingsford became President of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society in the year 1883, and was by the Mahatma's telegraphic command (received on December 9, 1883) re-elected to the office in 1884. "In a letter . . . conditionally accepting the presidentship," writes K.H. in January, 1883, "she expresses her belief —nay, points it out as an undeniable fact—that before the appearance of 'The Perfect Way' no one 'knew what the Oriental school really held about Reincarnation'; and adds that 'seeing how much has been told in that book, the adepts (our Mahatmas) are hastening to unlock their own treasures, so 'grudgingly doled out hitherto'" (p. 328). This rather unkind suggestion of Mrs. Kingsford may have had some basis in fact, but its frank utterance must have hurt the pride—if he had any—of the Mahatma, and it would explain his never afterwards losing an opportunity of making unmasculine comments on the "feminine vanity", the "golden hair" or the "fascination" of the Hermetic Doctor.

Mrs. Kingsford's Claims to Priority

Mr. Sinnett's Master was very anxious that Mrs. Kingsford's claim to the prior publication of the doctrine of Reincarnation should not gain currency in the Theosophical Society. Hence he gave the following instruction: "Write then, good friend,

Reincarnation Misunderstood

to Mr. Massey the truth. Tell him that you were possessed of the Oriental views of reincarnation several months before the work in question had appeared—since it is in July (18 months ago) that you began being taught the difference between Reincarnation à la Allan Kardec,* or personal rebirth—and that of the Spiritual Monad; a difference first pointed out to you on July 5th at Bombay" (p. 329).

Although the point of priority is a trivial one for us at this date, we must at least see justice done to the seraphic Doctor, and state the facts as we read them. First, let us interpose from *The Life of Anna Kingsford*, by Mr. Maitland, an account of Mr. Sinnett's conversation with the Hermetic collaborators on the occasion of his visit to London to bring out *The Occult World*. After admitting the natural curiosity of Mrs. Kingsford and himself as to the existence of the Mahatmas, Mr. Maitland goes on to recount what passed on the subject of the Eastern doctrines. He says: "We knew, too, that Reincarnation, under the name of Transmigration, was an Eastern tenet, and consequently the doctrine of Karma. . . . We were therefore greatly surprised to learn from Mr. Sinnett that these tenets formed no part of the doctrine of the Theosophical Society, being neither contained in their chief text-book, the 'Isis Unveiled' of its foundress, nor communicated to it by its Masters, and on these grounds Mr. Sinnett rejected them, sitting up with us till long

* "Alan Kardec", the pseudonym of L. H. D. Rivail, the French spiritist, author of *Le Livre des Esprits*.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

after midnight arguing against them" (Vol. II, p. 19).

If the foregoing is a veracious account of the Theosophico-Hermetic debate, we may suppose that Mr. Sinnett returned to India holding the same views as he had therein maintained. As a matter of history, therefore, we have established the fact that in the early summer of 1881 Mrs. Kingsford was arguing for her "idea" and Mr. Sinnett (as instructed by his Master) was arguing against it. This settles the point of "priority", for what it is worth, in favour of the lady. It is obvious that her claim cannot be invalidated by the fact that "the work in question"—*The Perfect Way*—appeared in print six months later than these events. Indeed, it is further supported by a sequel to Mr. Maitland's story, contained in a letter of Mrs. Kingsford's, dated July 3, 1882, in which she writes: "Mr. Sinnett has completely altered his views on Reincarnation. When he came to see us a year ago in London, he vehemently denied the doctrine. He had not then received any instruction from his Guru about it. Now, he has been so instructed, and wrote to Mr. Maitland a long letter acknowledging the truth of the doctrine, which, since seeing us, he has been taught" (*Life of A.K.*, Vol. II, p. 75).

As to the Mahatma's appeal above made to the date and contents of his Letter of July 5, 1881, here, unfortunately, his memory betrays him, for not only does it not mention Kardec's "personal" theory of Reincarnation, or formulate the theory

Reincarnation Misunderstood

of "the spiritual monad", but, as already shown, it allows that "Mrs. Kingsford's idea—is the true one".

We trust that Mr. Sinnett remembered the date and character of the London conversations, compared them with his Master's Letter, and did *not* write "the truth" as advised to Mr. Massey; that is, unless the teaching had been given to him through a channel other than these Letters. Of this we cannot see the faintest possibility, for Mr. Sinnett himself tells us that he was on the sea till July 7th, and received the Letter in question (dated the 5th) after landing at Bombay on the 8th.

Eleven months later—June, 1882—the Mahatma summarizes in Letter xviii the "gigantic evolutionary journey" that "every Spiritual Individuality has to perform"; adding this parenthesis on the Kingsford issue: "With all that there is *no* reincarnation as taught by the London Seeress—Mrs. A. K., as the intervals between the *re-births* are too immeasurably long to permit of any such fantastic ideas"*(p. 119).

Although the sentence just quoted rightly makes the truth about Reincarnation the only point of importance, we must add here an expression of surprise that the conflict as to priority in the publication of the doctrine should ever have arisen, seeing that for ages India had based its various philosophies on the double doctrine of *Karma-Samsāra*, or deeds and their consequences in successive terrestrial rebirths. The very earliest Upanishad, the

* We should like to know why this sentence is cut out of *The Early Teachings*.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Brihadāranyaka, contains, for the first time in Indian literature, an explicit if primitive teaching of Reincarnation. We claim for Yāgnavālkya a "priority" of three thousand years over the disputing worthies of the 'eighties. It is inexplicable to us how either of them could have been ignorant of the nature and antiquity of this fundamental doctrine, and especially so in the case of a Hindu Mahatma with access to "the largest library in the world", on whose shelves must have been lying the *Bhagavad Gita*, if no other Indian book.

"Isis" on the Doctrine

Before closing this Section, it will be useful to quote those passages on Reincarnation said to be "correctly stated in *Isis*". They go to prove that Madame Blavatsky in 1877 and the Mahatma in 1881 held similar views on the doctrine, the truth of which, be it noted, they both denied.

In the Index to *Isis* there is the following entry: "*Reincarnation, its cause, I, 346; its possibility and impossibility, I, 351.*"

After quoting from Porphyry, Iamblichus and Apuleius, Madame Blavatsky has the following paragraph: "The language can hardly be called ambiguous, and yet, the Reincarnationists quote Apuleius in corroboration of their theory that man passes through a succession of physical human births upon this planet until he is finally purged from the dross of his nature. But Apuleius distinctly says that we come upon earth from another

Reincarnation Misunderstood

one" (p. 345). Farther on we read: "Some unfortunates fall out entirely, and lose all chance of the prize; some retrace their steps and begin again. This is what the Hindu dreads above all things—*transmigration and reincarnation*; only on other planet, never on this one. . . . At his death the Arhat is never reincarnated" (p. 346), "this *former life* believed in by the Buddhists, is not a life on *this planet*" (p. 347).

Not a life on *this planet*! We wonder what the Buddhist readers of *Isis* must have thought of this statement, seeing that the *Birth stories* of the Buddha, to mention no others, tell of his *five hundred previous lives* "on this planet".

"Not a Rule in Nature"

A further passage from *Isis* will enable the reader to award the prize for "priority" in the announcement of Reincarnation to him or her who seems to deserve it. Here Madame Blavatsky writes: "Re-incarnation, *i.e.* the appearance of the same individual, or rather his astral monad, twice on the same planet, is not a rule in nature. It is an exception, like . . . a two-headed infant. Thus, in cases of abortion, of infants dying before a certain age, and of congenital and incurable idiocy, nature's original design to produce a perfect human being, has been interrupted. Therefore . . . the immortal spirit . . . must try a second time to carry out the purpose of the creative intelligence. If reason has been so far developed as to become

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

active and discriminative, there is no reincarnation on this earth" (p. 351). "When, through vice, fearful crimes and animal passions, a disembodied spirit has fallen to the eighth sphere . . . he can struggle once more to the surface" (p. 352).

A Disturbing Reflection

If the passage just quoted were held to be the whole truth on the doctrine of Reincarnation, it would raise disturbing reflections in the minds of those Theosophical worthies whose past earth-lives have in recent years been clairvoyantly and vividly recovered for them. For it would show that they owe their present lives to one or other of a list of causes which self-regard would induce them to hide. But since the particular life-stories as recovered are on the whole not discreditable to the reincarnated persons concerned, it is clear that the general causes of rebirth are not now limited to the catalogue of misfortunes, crimes and sins given long ago in the pages of *Isis*. This is no more than we should have inferred from the well-known fact that the teaching of the Theosophical Society on this subject now approximates to the belief, common to nearly all Eastern religions and philosophies, that Reincarnation is an experience universal and normal to the human race. Why it was that the doctrine, if true, was at any time denied, withheld, or only "grudgingly doled out" by the writers of *The Mahatma Letters* is a matter we need not further discuss.

SECTION X

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

THE Mahatma Letters were written during the early 'eighties, by which time a good deal was known in Europe about Indian philosophies and the works in which they had been recorded. The translations of the *Sacred Books of the East* had begun to appear, and the earlier collections by Hodgson, Monier-Williams, Spence Hardy, Muir and others were well known to the scholarly world. There was no mystery about the contents of the Indian wisdom, nor miracle about the manner of its being made known.

The initial impression given by the writers of the Mahatma Letters is that they are fully informed on all these matters. Numerous references to the works, words and doctrines of the Hindu and Buddhist writings are scattered throughout their pages; but a close examination of them fails to elicit any clear information. Even where the references are not merely passing observations, they convey the uneasy feeling that the writers are rather airing their knowledge than communicating it. Not without weighing our words we say that on hardly a subject that can be verified are they ordinarily correct; while, as for lucidity of expression, it does not exist. Many passages are *quite incomprehensible*. From these poor and superficial possessions, then, it seems the Mahatmas proposed

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

to furnish the world with an “eclectic system” made up of the various elements of Eastern and Western philosophies (with some new ideas of their own) and to entitle it “Occult Science” or “Our Philosophy”. So far as we are able to find Indian thought present in the Letters, this eclectic system is woefully confusing. We are bound to add that some of its elements are wrongly attributed to authoritative documents with a daring so startling as to suggest a deliberate endeavour to deceive.

(a) The Vedānta Misrepresented

In the course of thousands of years, India had produced a long chain of religious and philosophical writings, from the Rig-Veda to the Purānas. Their chronology is now fairly well known; better, however, than it was fifty years ago. Of a knowledge of this chronology the Mahatmas show no sign. Moreover, Buddhism is mixed with Brahmanism in a most unaccountable manner, and all the endeavours of European scholars to produce a literary cosmos for India are laughed to scorn. The literary studies of Max Müller, Monier-Williams and Rhys Davids receive the Mahatmic contempt in measure quite as large as that poured on the science of Tyndall and Huxley.

All Indian philosophy is either founded on the Upanishads or is a declension from them. It is remarkable, therefore, that only one insignificant reference to these works (in a passing quotation from “Upanishad”) is found in the Letters (p. 280).

Indian Philosophy

Similarly, the Vedânta, the first and last fruit of the Upanishads, receives scant attention.

"Our doctrines show", writes K.H. (p. 141), "but one principle in nature—spirit-matter or matter-spirit, the third the ultimate Absolute. . . . This third principle, say the Vedântic Philosophers—is the only reality, everything else being Maya."

The Vedântists do not express themselves in these terms; Brahman is the sole reality, not a "third principle".

Are the Mahatmas, then, Vedântists? Whatever other meaning these words may convey, it would seem that they are. Two more casual references to Vedântism do not further enlighten us, but the system under its technical name *Advaitism* is alluded to several times. "We are not Adwaitees" (p. 53); "We never were Adwaitees" (p. 288). Our question above is answered; the Mahatmas are not Vedântists.

Though the writers are certainly not Vedântists—as almost every page of the Letters shows—yet the technical terms of the Vedântist philosophy are used by them in profusion: Avidya (nescience), Mâyâ (illusion), Gunas (qualities), Buddhi (wisdom), Prakriti (nature), Akâsa (ether, space), Jîva (soul), Atman (self), Isvara (God of the lower knowledge), Parabrahm (the ultimate Power), etc. We must add that hardly one of these terms is used intelligibly, accurately and consistently, of which p. 90 gives proof to any well-informed reader.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The Meaning of Mâyâ—Illusion

In Letter x, addressed to Mr. Hume, the Mahatma says boldly: "Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God. . . . Therefore, we deny God both as philosophers and as Buddhists . . . there is in our system no such thing as God, either personal or impersonal. Parabrahm is not a God, but absolute immutable law, and Iswar is the effect of Avidya and Mâyâ, ignorance based on the great delusion" (p. 52).

As students of the Vedânta know, the sole reality of that system is called Brahman or the Âtman (Kernel of the Universe). In virtue of man's limited sensibility, he is unable to know the sole reality as it is. This limitation is subjective, and is called *avidya*—nescience. The objective effect of *avidya* is *mâyâ*—illusion. That is to say, since our vision is limited, what we see with it cannot be real. Therefore when *avidya* passes away (if ever it does) *mâyâ* passes with it, and we then see the reality. But what is that reality? It is our identity with Brahman; we become *advayatva*—"non-dual". During the state of *avidya* we are encouraged to worship Isvara, that is to say, Parabrahmn, the sole reality, conceived of as God; but when *avidya* and *mâyâ* together pass away, we cease to worship, because we have become identified with that which, through faith, we formerly worshipped.

It is surely idle to say that this, the Vedânta system, does not teach belief in God, as this Letter suggests.

Indian Philosophy

(b) Buddhism Corrupted

If the Mahatmas are Buddhists—as they have just said—why do they set themselves the impossible task of teaching Buddhism in Vedântist terms? Are not the Buddhist scriptures open to them? Yes; but they do not invoke them; for they were “written for the superstitious masses” (p. 54). In spite of this disparagement of these scriptures, however, the Mahatmas, in their excursions into Buddhism, condescend now and again to quote from them, sometimes with remarkable results. Let us turn to p. 58 and attend to the Mahatma’s words beginning “Read the *Mahavagga*”, etc.

The point of interest here is not the truth of the doctrine, but the truth of the citation to its original text. “Read the *Mahavagga*”, says the Mahatma, “and try to understand not with the prejudiced Western mind but the spirit of intuition and truth what the Fully Enlightened one says in the 1st Khandhaka. Allow me to translate it for you.” Then follows a passage of nineteen lines, corresponding roughly to the English of the despised Rhys Davids, whose version of the *Mahâvagga* had appeared, and was actually available in the year 1881, when this letter was written.

Was it necessary for the Mahatma to ask to be allowed to “translate” this passage? The result, in any case, is unfortunate, for three place-names are miss-spelt (*Uruvella*, *Nerovigara*, *Bodhi tree*), a score of words are obviously wrongly rendered, and as many more are omitted or misplaced; there

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters ?

are also four interpolations. Yet withal one would say the version is copied, *including his explanatory parentheses*, from Rhys Davids.

In proof of the statements above made, we give the two versions of the “1st Khandhaka”—Rhys Davids’ and the Mahatma’s—for comparison.

1. *Rhys Davids’ Version (S.B.E., Vol. XIII, pp. 73–8)*

- “1. At that time the blessed Buddha dwelt at Uruvelâ, on the bank of the river Nerañgarâ, at the foot of the Bodhi tree (tree of wisdom), just after he had become Sambuddha. . . .
- “2. Then the Blessed One [at the end of these seven days] during the first watch of the night fixed his mind upon the Chain of Causation, in direct and reverse order: ‘From Ignorance spring the samkhâras, from the samkhâras springs Consciousness, from Consciousness spring Name-and-Form, from Name-and-Form spring the six Provinces (of the six senses) from the six Provinces springs Contact, from Contact springs Sensation, from Sensation springs Thirst (or Desire) from Thirst springs Attachment, from Attachment springs Existence, from Existence springs Birth, from Birth springs Old Age and Death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair. Again, by the destruction of Ignorance, which consists in the complete absence of lust, the samkhâras are destroyed. . . . Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.’

Indian Philosophy

- “3. Knowing this the Blessed One then on that occasion pronounced this solemn utterance: ‘When the real nature of things becomes clear to the ardent, meditating Brahmana, then all his doubts fade away, since he realizes what is that nature and what its cause. . . .
- “7. . . . he stands, dispelling the hosts of Mâra, like the sun that illuminates the sky.’”

II. *The Mahatma's Version* (pp. 58–9)

“At the time the blessed Buddha was at Uruvella on the shores of the river Nerovigara as he rested under the Bodhi tree of *wisdom** after he had become Sambuddha, *at the end of the seventh day** having his mind fixed on the chain of causation he spake thus: ‘from Ignorance spring the samkharas of threefold nature—productions of body, of speech, of thoughts. From the samkharas springs consciousness, from consciousness springs name and form, from this spring the six regions (*of the six senses** the seventh being the property of but the enlightened); from these springs contact from this sensation; from this springs thirst (*or desire*,* Kama, tanha) from thirst attachment, existence, birth, old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair. Again by the destruction of ignorance, the Samkharas are destroyed, and their consciousness name and form, the six regions contact, sensation, thirst, attachment (selfishness),

* The phrases set by us in italics are Rhys Davids' own parentheses taken over into the Mahatma's “translation”.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

existence, birth, old age, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and despair are destroyed. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.'

"Knowing this the blessed one uttered this solemn utterance. 'When the real nature of things becomes clear to the meditating Bikshu, then all his doubts fade away since he has learned what is that nature and what it's cause. From ignorance spring all the evils. From knowledge comes the cessation of this mass of misery, and then the meditating Brahmana stands dispelling the hosts of Mara like the sun that illuminates the sky'."

(c) "*The Devachan*" and "*Sukhāvatī*"

Passing on to Letter xvi, known as *The Devachan Letter*, we meet with another quotation from the Buddhist scriptures (p. 100), and recognise in it a description of Sukhāvatī, the "Land of Bliss" of the Mahāyāna school. "The Devachan"—the new Theosophical heaven—had been mentioned for the first time, but not explained, in Letter xiii (p. 72). Mr. Sinnett reverts to it in a query on p. 99, saying—if he remembers rightly—that that was the name given "in the last *Theosophist*" to the state of beatitude there described. He was right, and K.H. at once answers the query. "The Deva-Chan, or land of 'Sukhavati', is *allegorically* described by our Lord Buddha himself. What he said may be found in the *Shan-Mun-yi-Tung*."

In this case the Mahatma does not ask to be "allowed to translate" the passage; the work that

Indian Philosophy

he quotes—the *Shan-mun-yih-tung*, to be correct—is a Chinese version of Kurmārajiva's translation (about A.D. 400) of the *Amitāyah Sutra*, a Sanskrit work of the Mahāyāna school. It appears in English in Beal's *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese* (1871) and it looks as if Beal had saved K.H. not a little labour by translating it. Still, it puzzles us that the Mahatma, if he used Beal's version, should have read into it a list of Arhats, Dhyan Chohans, Bodhisatwas, and finally the Deva-Chan itself, *none of which it mentions*. Here follow the two passages for comparison.

1. *Beal's Version (Catena, pp. 378-83)*

"At this time Buddha addressed the venerable Sâriputra as follows: 'In the western regions more than one hundred thousand myriads of systems of worlds beyond this, there is a Sakwala named Sukhâvatî. Why is this region so named? Because all those born in it have no griefs or sorrows: they experience only unmixed joys; therefore it is named the infinitely happy land. Again, Sâriputra, this happy region is surrounded by seven rows of ornamental railings, seven rows of exquisite curtains, seven rows of waving trees—hence, again, it is called the infinitely happy region. Again, Sâriputra, this happy land possesses seven gemmous lakes, in the midst of which flow waters possessed of the eight distinctive qualities (viz. limpidity and purity, refreshing coolness, sweetness, softness, fertilizing qualities, calmness, power of preventing famine,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

productiveness). Again, Sâriputra, the land of that Buddha ever shares in heavenly delights (or music) the ground is resplendent gold; at morning and evening showers of the Divine Udambara flower descend upon all those born there, at early dawn the most exquisite blossoms burst out at their side; thousand myriads of Buddhas instantly resort here for refreshment, and then return to their own regions, and for this reason, Sâriputra, that land is called most happy. . . .

“‘So it is, Sâriputra, that land of Buddha is perfected. Again, Sâriputra, in that land of perfect joy all who are born are born as Avaivartyas (never to return) whilst among these there are numbers who make *this* their resting place before that one birth more (which shall end in their arrival at Buddhahood); infinite are these in number, not to be expressed for multitude, simply innumerable.’”

II. *The Mahatma's Version* (p. 100)

Says Tathagâta: “Many thousand myriads of systems of worlds beyond this (ours) there is a region of Bliss called *Sukhavati*. . . . This region is encircled with *seven* rows of railings, *seven* rows of vast curtains, *seven* rows of waving trees; this holy abode of Arahats is governed by the Tathagâtas (Dyan Chohans) and is possessed by the Bodhisatwas. It hath *seven* precious lakes, in the midst of which flow crystalline waters having ‘*seven and one*’ properties, or distinctive qualities (the 7 principles emanating from the *One*). This, O, Sariputra is the ‘Deva Chan’.

Indian Philosophy

Its divine Udambara flower casts a root *in the shadow of every earth*, and blossoms for all those who reach it. Those born in the blessed region are truly felicitous, there are no more griefs or sorrows *in that cycle* for them. Myriads of Spirits (Lha) resort there for rest and then *return to their own regions*.¹ Again, O, Sariputra, in that land of joy many who are born in it are *Avaivartyas*. . . .”²

The words Tathagâta and Sukavali above should read Tathâgata and Sukhâvatî.

Max Müller's Older Sanskrit Text

We have said the Sutra existed in Sanskrit earlier than in Chinese, and we are fortunate in having it translated by Max Müller directly from a manuscript which he discovered in Japan. This is the true document, and though it does not seriously differ from Beal's *Shan*, it agrees with it exactly *in omitting the Mahatma's added matter*.

We gather from a reference in Letter LXI to Beal's *Catena* (p. 344) that that work was at the Mahatma's elbow when he was writing about July, 1883, but we cannot be sure that Max Müller's *S.B.E.* volume was out in 1882, when Letter XVI was penned. At any rate, we prefer not to urge his high authority against the Mahatma, for in Letter XXXI (p. 241) the great translator is disparaged in advance by the exclamation: “Oh, K.H.'s footnotes:

¹ Those who have not ended their earth rings.

² Literally—“those who will never return”, the seventh round men.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

ye Max Mullers . . . what have ye done with our philosophy!" They have carelessly omitted or purposely cut out the "Dhyan Chohans" and the "Deva-Chan" from the Esoteric text!

(d) Buddha versus Buddha

Most surprising of all the appeals to the Buddhist scriptures is the saying attributed to Buddha on p. 455, contradicting his well-known teaching of *Anatta*, or "non-soul". The sceptical Mr. Hume had noticed the obvious contradiction between the accepted doctrine of *Anatta* (acknowledged by K.H. in a remark: "Remember that there is within man no abiding principle") and the newly revealed "sixth and seventh principles, *Buddhi-Atma*." The Mahatma replies: "Neither *Atma* nor *Buddhi* ever were *within man*"—they float over "the extreme part of the man's head", as Plutarch taught on the authority of Plato and Pythagoras. Thus the long controversy between *Vedânta* and Buddhism is closed by research among the Greek folios in a Tibetan Library.

The passage from some mysterious document reads as follows: Says Buddha: "You have to get rid entirely of all the subjects of impermanence composing the body that your body should become permanent. The permanent never merges with the impermanent although the two are one. But it is only when all outward appearances are gone that there is left that one principle of life which exists independently of all external phenomena. It is

Indian Philosophy

the fire that burns in the eternal light, when the fuel is expended and the flame is extinguished; for that fire is neither in the flame nor in the fuel, nor yet inside either of the two but above beneath and everywhere" (p. 455).

Anything less like the Buddha's style of speech and teaching than this passage it would be hard to conceive. Where it is clear it makes Buddha recant his lifelong-taught doctrine of *Anatta*; where it is not clear it is impossible to find any meaning in it. K.H. first writes (p. 455): "There is within man no abiding principle"; when Mr. Hume asks: "How about the sixth and seventh principles?" K.H. replies with the quibble ("a little metaphysical axiom") that these principles are *not within man*, but over "the extreme part of the man's head". "If you don't believe me" (he seems to say), "take the fact from Pythagoras, through Plato and Plutarch. But, if you hear not the Greeks, *read what the Lord Buddha himself says in the Parinirvana Sutra.*" We may say that, in obedience to this injunction, we have made a careful search in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, but have been unable to discover in it any passage corresponding to the Mahatma's curious citation.

Having deprived the Vedânta system of its characteristic deity, the Mahatmas feel equal to providing the Buddha's soul-less system with a *soul* floating above our heads. His technical terms are abundantly employed in the Letters, and often incorrectly. Nirvâna, in twenty cases, is rightly used only in one, being casual or wrong in the rest.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters ?

Bhikkhus, Arhats and Bodhisattvas are not accurately differentiated. The first is a wandering mendicant, the second is one who has reached the nirvanic state here on earth, and the third is an Arhat who has left the earth and is on the way to become a Buddha. Dharmakâya (Truth body) is called "the universally diffused essence" (p. 90), an unhappy definition of the central idea of the Mahâyâna system. Karma, common to Hindu and Buddhist teachings, ambles through the book without lucid exposition, but receives in many passages "trans-Himâlayan" touches. The general plan of commentary seems to be that those Mahatmic innovations which find no confirmation in the known scriptures of Hindu or Buddhist faith, are introduced either as corrections of ignorant Western translators or as revelations of secret doctrines unknown to the Indian exoterics. It is difficult, therefore, to pursue the writers of the Letters with criticism to their very doors. They can come to us, but we cannot go to them. We must halt in the pass at Darjeeling, where, across the mountains, we can almost hear the laughter of the omniscient Mahatmas reverberating at our expense.

SECTION XI

THE STYLE AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE LETTERS

THE Letters are written in English, but in a style that can only be described as unique. They do not in taste conform to the best epistolary models in our language, nor do they even obey the rules of punctuation, spelling, grammar and construction commonly observed in English writing. The fact that the Letters were not written for publication might justify many of these liberties—if they are such—and the further consideration that their writers were said to be natives of India residing in Tibet might perhaps excuse them as deficiencies. These allowances having been made, one would expect that such errors and peculiarities as the Letters contain would show, in some involuntary way, vestiges of their writers' nativity, culture and tongue. These, however, they do not show. Apart from a few ornate greetings in the earlier Letters, such as "Esteemed Brother and Friend", "Much Esteemed Sir", "Good Brother", there is no trace of the Orient in the manner of the writing.

Not Oriental

Since the style of the Letters is not Eastern, it requires some explanation as to why it is in general so obviously Western, and in particular so fully

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

charged with French flavour and construction. It is not in respect of French words and phrases abundantly and perhaps unnecessarily employed in an English text that we make this comment—though that in itself is a curious intrusion—for the range of general knowledge claimed by and for the Mahatmas would allow for this epistolary play. When, for example, Mahatma K.H., in writing Letter xxxi “from the depths of an unknown valley, amid the steep crags and glaciers of Terich-Mir”, drops suddenly into the familiar style of the verandah with the question: “*Queer, n'est ce pas?*” (p. 240) we realize that he is in this only relaxing for a moment his grave Mahatmic tone, and we appreciate the friendly bi-lingual touch. But when we find him throughout the book writing torrents of vigorous if rather turbid English, which prove, when examined, that he is thinking no less hard in French, his employment of the foreign forms seems more of a necessity than a grace, and provokes surprise. Let us, in support of this point, call attention to some of the more striking instances of alien terms and construction in the Letters. The words following marked by us in italics give the literal but unusual English of the text; those in brackets give the French basis suggested as present in the writer's mind.

A French Grammatical Basis

M.L., p. 2 before you could *make the round* (*faire le tour*) of Hyde Park.

The Style and Construction of the Letters

- M.L., p. 4 Were they given to *the profanes* (*les profanes*)
23 look at yourselves *how* (*comme*) you really are.
39 *he rested but* (*il ne resta que*) to accuse us of—
43 S.M. passes *the two thirds* (*les deux tiers*) of his life in Trance.
60 the one element for which *the English* (*l'anglais*) has no name.
111 And *once that* (*une fois que*) you have well mastered the meaning—
141 seems to say *at least* (*au moins*) strange.
212 The lack of *that* (*ce que*) you term “low motives”—
226 and *makes a violence to* (*fait violence à*) his feelings—
237 I have *an advice* (*un avis*) to offer.
241 *I write but seldom letters.* (*Je n'écris que rarement des lettres.*)
255 he would be the first to *suggest you the idea*—
(*de vous inspirer l'idée*).
258 What can we do! *I hear already K.H. proclaiming* (*j'entends déjà K.H. qui s'écrie*).
307 *succeeded to arouse* (*reussit à éveiller*) his suspicions—
364 *Why have you printed it* (*pourquoi avez vous l'imprimé*) before sending it to me for revision?
462 *give up entirely caste* (*renonça entièrement à la caste*).

- B.L., p. 370 We never bury our dead. They are burnt or left *above the earth* (*sur terre*) (K.H.).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

We could easily overcrowd our space with such Gallic phrases as the foregoing, but must be content with another dozen. "The strategy" for strategy; "The space" for space; "as deep once more" for as deep again; "cadavre" for corpse; "comes to age" for comes of age; "The Cendrillon" for Cinderella; "Don Quichote" for Don Quixote; "legal" for legitimate; "in the hands of law" for in the hands of the law; "on the bench of criminals" (*sur le banc des accusés*) for in the dock; "a local" (*un local*) for a locality; "inclement pays and cold" for inclement and cold country; "lessons of English" for lessons in English.

Throughout the book "but" is used in a peculiar manner. Sometimes, though rarely, it is an English conjunction, more often it has the sense of "only", "solely", or "merely"; as, for examples, "I do not say it *was* so; I but enquire"; "I but jokingly asked O."; "speculating but upon the present"; "They have disturbed but bats". To whatever language these forms may belong, they seem unhappily placed in modern English; though it is clear that the examples numbered 39 and 241 above have the value of and originate in the French "ne-que".

Transatlantic Elements

We have said that the style of the Letters is generally Western, and have given proof of their thought-basis in a European language. We must now remark upon another component of these polyglot pages;

The Style and Construction of the Letters

which, though Western, and a sort of English, we must for convenience (and we hope without offence) call "American". Here follow a few gleanings in this field.

(a) The words "skeptics" (pp. 1, 3, 5) and "skepticism" (pp. 4-35) tell their own tale. We learn from Mr. Sinnett that these awkward k's, occurring four times in the Mahatma's first Letter, had been the subject of comment at the dinner-table, where "Madame Blavatsky had been saying that Koot Hoomi's spelling of skepticism with a 'k' was not an Americanism in his case, but due to a philological whim of his". And of hers too, may we add, if *The Theosophist* (May, '24, p. 248) does not in two places belie her: "Let skeptics say—I did it"; "which makes skeptics and unbelievers laugh at us". Evidently she had forgotten that Webster had already adopted her own and K.H.'s "philological whim" by calling "sceptic" a variant of "skeptic". "Checkered" (p. 296) is another Webster-warranted word in the Mahatma's vocabulary.

(b) The Mahatmas' style in handling "mundane affairs" appears in the following phrases: "that you, at least—mean business; that you are in right good earnest" (p. 39); "Some thirty-five years back" (p. 60); "considering how tight the negociations . . . prove" (p. 202); "And now we will talk" (p. 259); "the hopes of their original backers" (p. 263); "send you a telegram and answer on back on't" (p. 269); "if he would not break with the whole shop altogether" (p. 270);

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

"we will split the difference and shake our astral hands . . . and square the discussion" (p. 271); "And I like it all the more I promise you" (p. 271); "Only, look out sharp" (p. 272); "I have very little time to explore back letters" (p. 289).

(c) Here, perhaps, the Mahatmas have descended from "mundane affairs" to "worldly business", and their pens are sometimes "dipped in gall". " . . . is, I am sorry to say, a true skunk *mephitis*" (p. 37); "her nerves are worked to a fiddle string" (p. 39); "the Elementary Spooks" (p. 40); "it is extinguished, or as H.P.B. has it—snuffed out" (p. 67); "he is butting against the facts" (p. 75); "some hum-drum person, some colourless, flaccid personality" (p. 196); "he was in the wrong box" (p. 253); "If the laugh is not turned on the Statesman" (p. 256); "what a Yankee would call 'a blazing cock-a-hoop'" (p. 312); "he can play the deuce with yourself and society" (p. 326); "as the Americans would say—the *fix* I am in" (p. 370); "the 'almighty smash' that is in store for them" (p. 391).

(d) As an example of the French and American styles in graceful fusion, we conclude with the sentence: "'Then and there' in the eternity may be a mighty long period" (p. 176).

A good number of the broader phrases quoted in paragraphs (b) and (c) are from the pen of the jovial Mahatma M.

The Style and Construction of the Letters

Erratic Punctuation

We have mentioned under the present heading the factors of punctuation, spelling and grammar. The irregular punctuation of the Letters is one of their most striking characteristics. In the *Occult World* series—one of the clearest of the sections—the writer is at strife with the harmless necessary comma in quite two hundred and fifty places, most of which Mr. Sinnett corrected before the first seven Letters saw the light. K.H.'s favourite pointer is the long dash ("Let this—encourage you") which gives a sense of oratory to the writing, and, by making a new rule, avoids breaking an old one. Occasionally he trips the reader up with unwanted commas, as in the following sentences: "We are, even more generous, than you British are to us" (p. 14); "his development keeps pace, with the globe on which he is" (p. 95); "one, who, remained for over nine days in his stirrups" (p. 286); "Because, he succeeded in catching but a few stray sparks" (p. 319); "But now the time has come for us, to try to have you" (p. 327). This last is one of the seventy slips in punctuation in Letter LVII, which shows the average of error to be well sustained throughout the book.

Literary References

In our tenth Section—entitled *Indian Philosophy*—we examined the references made by the Mahatmas to the texts of Hindu and Buddhist writings, and

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

showed that they came short of the knowledge which their high pretensions would lead us to expect them to possess; therefore that their communications of this sort were neither informative nor edifying. In this Section we propose to make a scrutiny into the Mahatmas' gleanings in other literary fields, confining our attention to the acquaintance shown by them with the works of English writers, poets and novelists, and the traditional phrases adopted from classical tongues.

The Mahatmas' Model

(a) Shakespeare is quoted twice, and correctly; Bacon once, but incorrectly; a trifling slip compared to the extension of his life, from 1626 to 1662 in Letter 1; Milton speaks once, we presume correctly; Edward Bulwer, the novelist—an occult classic and an evident favourite of the Masters and Madame Blavatsky—is mentioned many times. The name of Mejnour, the mystical sage in his "Zanoni", is spelt "Mejnoor" (p. 32). The horrible "Dweller of the Threshold", borrowed from this novel, becomes an ever-haunting bogey in both collections of Letters, and the system of correspondence set up between Mejnour, the remote-dwelling sage, and the unfortunate idealist Zanoni seems to be the model of that afterwards adopted by the Mahatmas in their dealings with Mr. Sinnett and his friends.

(b) The last line of Arnold's "Light of Asia"—"The Dewdrop slips into the shining sea"—is paraphrased in the following crude and ungram-

The Style and Construction of the Letters

matical sentence: "not one of the humble 'dew-drops' . . . have ever tried to slip back into the shining Sea of Nirvana" (p. 33).

A Libel on a Laureate

(c) Mahatma K.H. winds up Letter xi with six lines of very poor verse, adding: "You might have closed your book (*The Occult World*) with those lines of Tennyson's 'Wakeful Dreamer'" (p. 51). We cannot find the lines in Tennyson's works; nor could Mr. Sinnett, apparently, and he must have written to this effect to his Master. The latter, in his reply, dated one month later, concludes with an apology in twenty-four lines, of which the following is the substance: "Quotation from Tennyson? Really cannot say. Some stray lines picked up in the astral light or in somebody's brain and remembered, I never forget what I once see or read. A bad habit. . . . Yet, I believe, the lines quoted were written by Tennyson years ago, and they are published" (p. 286). On the other side of the account, we must credit the Mahatma with having "picked up in the astral light" and quoted correctly, though without giving author's name or title, the first stanza of Christina Rossetti's poem "Up-Hill," beginning: "Does the road wind up-hill all the way?" (p. 262).

Philosophy, Poetry and Fiction

(d) Among the British scientists for whom the Mahatmas profess a small measure of respect,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Herbert Spencer is honoured by being four times mentioned in the Letters. In spite of this seeming familiarity with the philosopher's *First Principles*, the Mahatma turns his famous category—The Unknowable—into “The Great Unknown”, an amendment which would surely have horrified the unsentimental author had he lived to read it.

(e) Swift's well-known but seldom correctly quoted lines on fleas suffer two violations from the Mahatma's pen. In the author's own volume (1733) the following lines are found in a satirical piece “On Poetry”:

So, Natur'lists observe, a Flea
Hath smaller Fleas that on him prey;
And these have smaller still to bite 'em,
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.

In accordance with popular habit, Swift's lines are misquoted :

“These fleas have other fleas to bite 'em,
And these—their fleas *ad infinitum*” (p. 190).

Not content with this common mistake, the Mahatma adds another of his own, in attributing the lines to Butler, for he calls his verse “the Hudibrasian couplet”.

(f) There is abundant evidence that the lighter side of English literature is not despised by our Mahatmas. K.H. knows his great English novelists—Richardson, Bulwer, Thackeray, Dickens, Fennimore Cooper and Marion Crawford. Indeed, the last-named author's *Mr. Isaacs* is recommended to Mr. Sinnett for favourable review in *The*

The Style and Construction of the Letters

Pioneer, and the “young man by the name of Guppy” is a phrase parodied from *Bleak House* and pinned on to two British officers in India who were aspirants to the mysteries. We note as a curiosity that a Tibetan recluse knew “the Dickens’ touch” better than Adyar Headquarters. That this is so appears from a grammatical reviser’s pen having altered the Mahatma’s phrase: “‘the young men by the name of’—Scott and Banon” (*M.L.*, p. 113) to “the young men *of* the name of,” etc., in *E.T.M.* (p. 75).

The Mahatmas’ Dog-Latin

(g) We have already shown that the Letters are underlaid with French construction and freely sprinkled with French and American phrases. Here and there Italian tags occur—such as *tutti quanti* and *villagiatura*—but more often we meet the austere speech of ancient Rome itself, employed in ecclesiastical, philosophical, legal and logical terms. We would not make this a point of criticism but for the fact that most of the phrases are incorrectly rendered, as the collection here given proves. We reproduce the text exactly as it is printed, with suggested corrections enclosed in brackets.

- p. 31 *Missio in partis infidelium (partibus)* (K.H.).
53 *praetu Deum nequi dari nequi concepi potest substantia* (K.H.).
(Praeter Deum neque dari, neque concipi potest substantia) (Spinoza).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- 193 Swimming in *adversum flumen* (*in adverso flumene*) (K.H.).
- 193 The *modus operandus* of nature (*operandi*) (K.H.).
- 318 independent in its *modus operandus* (K.H.).
- 213 Most unfortunate *qui pro quo* (*quid pro quo*) (K.H.).
- 227 A most unique *qui proquo* (M.).
- 297 indirectly mixed in the *quiproquo* (K.H.).
- 225 *Qui bono* then? (*Cui bono*) (M.).
- 386 *suppressio veri, suggestis (suggestio) falsi* (K.H.).

In commenting upon the above errors, we must allow for the possibility of some of them being due to careless copying from the MSS. Indeed, we can testify from examination to the existence of two of this kind, the first reading *odium theologium* in the printed text (p. 385) and *odium theologicum* in the MS. The second (p. 440) reads *argumentum ad hominum* in the text, and *ad hominem* in the MS. Assuming, however, that the remaining phrases are correctly copied from the MSS., they present a remarkable series of inexcusable slips, nearly all from the hand of a graduate of a German university, who never forgets what he has once read. Special attention ought to be called to the phrases on pp. 213, 227, 297, which exhibit the two Mahatmas using similar Latin terms and making the same mistakes.

We reserve for consideration in a later Section a group of references to Biblical texts, which are not only remarkable examples of literary licence, but specially significant in their bearing on the main theme of this book.

SECTION XII

THE SO-CALLED "PRECIPITATION" PROCESS

IN the four previous Sections we have given in outline a view of the philosophical contents and literary style of the Letters, and we come now to the consideration of a more physical matter, that is, the means by which they were said to have been produced. Although this includes the two questions of their writing and transmission, we shall for the present discuss only the first.

It will be remembered that the original announcement to the Western world of the existence of the Mahatmas in Tibet, and the receipt of letters from them, was made by Mr. Sinnett in *The Occult World*. It was there that he first employed the chemical term "precipitation" to account for the letters he had up to that time received. He says: "The writing was created or precipitated by a living human correspondent."

Since it is not alleged that there is any evidence of precipitation patent to the eye, the ground for the belief in it is found only in statements in the Letters themselves. It was from the four pages of Letter v that Mr. Sinnett extracted for his book the solitary sentence on this topic: "Besides, bear in mind, that these my letters, are not written but *impressed* or precipitated and then all mistakes corrected" (p. 19).

Trusting in the written word of his Master, and

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

fortified, no doubt, by the statements of Madame Blavatsky to the same effect, Mr. Sinnett launched the idea of literary “precipitation” upon the seas of public credence and criticism in the year 1881, after he had received at most *eight* Letters in which the process had been mentioned *twice*. It then became—and we suppose is still—the official and generally accepted account of the production of the Mahatma Letters. The extracts we shall now give from *The Early Teachings of the Masters* will be found to support this view.

Mr. Jinarājadāsa's Account

With a hundred more Letters in his ken than the eight first granted to Mr. Sinnett, and the advantage of forty more years in which to reflect on the mysteries of their production, the Indian editor writes as under in his Preface (p. 5) :

“The procedure adopted by the Masters seems to have been roughly as follows . . . These letters were not written by hand, but *precipitated*, that is not written by hand, but the writing materialized on the paper by a process used by the Adepts which involves the use of fourth dimensional space. . . . In precipitated letters there is no difference found which distinguishes them from a letter written by hand—There is no difference whatsoever in the handwriting. Each Master has His characteristic handwriting, like any of us.”

“But the remarkable fact is that, while this handwriting is personal to a Master, it is also like an

The So-Called "Precipitation" Process

office handwriting, from a particular office with a particular chief. Thus, certain pupils of the Masters M. and K.H. were given the right to *precipitate* (by occult means, not to write with the hand) in Their official handwriting. This is perfectly understandable, if we only realize that the Masters are not ascetics living aloof on the slopes of the snow-clad Himalayas, having nothing to do but live in the bliss of higher realms, but rather heads of great World Departments of activity, directing many workers and having very little time to spare." . . . "Sometimes They personally wrote, and this was especially the case with letters which gave directions to aspirants or Chelas whom They were not able to impress by any other occult means. But often instructions were given to an advanced Chela outlining what he was to say in reply to a question."

An Evasive Statement

We cannot say that we find any of the above explanations "perfectly understandable". The opening sentence, telling us that "the procedure adopted . . . seems to have been roughly as follows", is the keynote of an unauthoritative, indefinite and evasive statement. It is clear that the Vice-President does not write from personal knowledge, but from official tradition, and it is late in time to use the words "seems" and "roughly" in a scientific and historical narration. We crave some knowledge of the chemistry of literary "precipitation", and we are referred to the mathematics of "fourth dimen-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

sional space", and then left without a spark of enlightenment on this deeper mystery. Going on to say that "each Master has His characteristic handwriting like any of us", in which he either writes or precipitates, the editor adds a fact which he calls both "remarkable" and "perfectly understandable". This is that certain pupils of the Masters were allowed to precipitate in their official handwriting. Since the reason given for this arrangement is that it saves the Masters' time, we are bound to suggest that the same result would follow from the pupils writing in their own hands. The only result of writing in the Master's hand and signing his name is *the concealment of the pupil's agency*. What is the object of this arrangement?

The Mahatmas' Own Account

Having obtained very little information from *The Early Teachings*, let us now come to Mr. Barker's text, and see what the Mahatmas themselves have to say about Precipitation, in about twenty places.

First, we ought to remark that K.H.'s words "these my letters" must be taken to refer solely to his own. At the date of this statement Mahatma Morya was unknown to Mr. Sinnett, and in the twenty-five Letters that afterwards came in from him, there is not a hint that he precipitates; on the contrary, there are clear indications that he does not.

i. The first Letter printed from M.—No. xii—refers with apologies to the illegibility of his earlier

The So-Called "Precipitation" Process

efforts at writing—which do not find a place in the book. “I trust you will not find much difficulty—not as much as hitherto—in making out my letter. I have become a very plain writer since he [K.H.] reproached me with making you lose your valuable time over my scrawlings. His rebuke struck home, and as you see I have amended my evil ways” (p. 68).

2. If it should be suggested that the word “writer” in the above Letter may include “precipitator”, M.’s postscript disposes of the point: “My writing is good but the paper rather thin for penmanship. Cannot write English with a brush though; would be worse” (p. 70). The last sentence mystifies us. M. is an Indian, and if he writes in his native manner he would use a pen; so also if he wrote in Tibetan script. A brush is a Chinese or Japanese writing tool; where is the point in saying he cannot write English with it?

3. On p. 84 K.H. says of M. that “he knows very little English and *hates* writing”; which implies, we suppose, that he is debarred from precipitating, and obliged to use a hateful alternative—the pen.

4. M. concludes Letter xxix with this abrupt remark: “I close the longest letter I have ever written in my life” (p. 228). It is eleven printed pages long; a great achievement for one who hates writing, but nothing to call for remark if it had been precipitated.

5. On p. 262 M. describes his own writing as “my abominable penmanship”.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

6. On p. 349, M. excuses K.H.'s inability, on account of official business, "to write him [Mr. S.] individually whether by pen or precipitation—the more difficult, not to say costly, method of the two—to our reputations in the west anyhow". This little pleasantry indicates that "the west" was beginning to ask awkward questions about the marvel of "precipitation"; the passage in any case helps to make it clear that whenever "the pen" comes in "precipitation" goes out.

7. "I will write more to-morrow", says M. in his last Letter in the book (p. 450), but we cannot identify another communication from him.

The seven citations given above prove conclusively that Mahatma Morya does not claim for himself the ability to precipitate writing. We have no interest in depriving him of this remarkable power, but we think we may impute laxity to both Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Jinarājadāsa in attributing to the Mahatmas *together*, in respect of *all their Letters*, a power which only *one* of them claimed for *a limited number* of his own.

What Says K.H.?

Let us now examine the evidence of Mahatma K.H., who makes the classical claim on p. 19—"these my letters are precipitated".

8. In his next Letter (answering an inquiry from Mr. Sinnett) he speaks of three possible methods of communication—precipitation, dictation or writing. "Whether I 'precipitate' or dictate

The So-Called "Precipitation" Process

them or write my answers myself, the difference in time saved is very minute. I have to *think* it over, to photograph every word and sentence carefully in my brain before it can be repeated by 'precipitation' . . . we have to first arrange our sentences and impress every letter to appear on paper in our minds before it becomes fit to be read. For the present, it is *all* I can tell you. . . . But you must know and remember one thing; we but follow and *servilely copy nature in her works*" (p. 22).

The reader will have observed with surprise that the mental preliminaries to an act of precipitation are more burdensome than those of ordinary writing, in which, generally, something is left, as to the choice of words, to the inspiration of the moment. Writing (unless it is mere copying) is practically concurrent with composition, but precipitation on paper cannot take effect until thought has finished its work. *Every sentence*, indeed *every letter*, is prearranged in the mind, and then, as we suppose, the whole "arrangement" descends upon paper. Since the Letters are not "written by hand" (as we are told by Adyar) their committal to paper must also be a mental act. Consequently there are in precipitation at least two main mental operations, "arrangement" and "impression", analogous to those of the printer's art—"composing" and "printing". The first is accomplished letter by letter, and the second in one stroke.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The Process Examined

We know well enough how printing is produced; let us examine the statements made above as to precipitation.

Since the Mahatma is reluctant to give us more than a hint in explanation of the process, we must follow up the clue contained in his words: "We but follow and *servilely copy nature* in her works." How, then, does Nature precipitate?

In the order of Nature, precipitation occurs—without the interference of man—in the conversion of vapours into rain, snow and hail, the laying of earthy strata in the beds of rivers and seas, and the loosening of mountainous deposits, glaciers or avalanches. In some of these cases a change of temperature is the converting or displacing agent, and in all of them gravitation is the force producing the final effect. In chemistry—but now by the interference of man—natural reagents are employed to separate substances in solution, and gravitation again effects their fall. Thus it is—in the words of Faraday—that "silver is thrown down by copper, copper by iron, lead by zinc".

If, as we are told above, literary "throwing down" is effected by means copied from Nature, we must infer that such substances as ink and lead and chalk pencil are capable of being assembled, against the action of gravity, in some upper region, there "arranged" in significant forms, and then released to gravity's control, just like any other liquid, chalk or mineral dust. How it is that mind

The So-Called "Precipitation" Process

thus masters matter (working "servilely" on the model of Nature) is a secret only known to the initiates, for what we have already been told is all that the Mahatma *at present* thinks good for us to know. Yet in spite of the Master's reticence, we think that there is one general principle that may be drawn from our observations on the subject, and that is that *no precipitated literary matter can be created ex nihilo, or evolved directly from its intellectual idea*; its pre-existence in a material state is admitted, and indeed it must as certainly have been an article in a stationery store as was the paper on which it ultimately falls. If it were otherwise, why did the Mahatma complain of *a shortage of paper* in Tibet and at the same time ask Mr. Sinnett to oblige him with "some receipt for blue ink"? (p. 34). Let us now return to our list of citations.

"Precipitation Unlawful"

9. Letter viii startles us not a little. Eleven pages on from the above details of the process, K.H. speaks of precipitation, in his pupil's case, as "having become unlawful" (p. 33). Why is this? We can only think that the Chohan has imposed this prohibition, which we find still in force seventeen months later—in July, 1882. This means that at least eight more Letters are unprecipitated; a point that the Vice-President has not apparently noted.

10. In Letter xvi K.H. remarks that the "blotched, patchy and mended appearance" of

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

his MSS. "proves that my leisure has come by snatches, by constant interruptions, and that my writing has been done in odd places here and there, with such materials as I could pick up" (p. 115).

Why should these petty impediments lie in the path of our Adept, who may have at need the use of "fourth dimensional space"? K.H. gives the reason: "But for the RULE that forbids our using one minimum of power until every ordinary means has been tried and failed, I might, of course have given you a lovely 'precipitation' as regard chirography and composition." We understand this to mean that the Mahatma must consent to his letter having "a miserable appearance" rather than work an unnecessary marvel. Mr. Sinnett was thanked for having kindly seen the significance of those "wayside annoyances"; "they take away most effectually the flavour of miracle, and make us as human beings, more thinkable entities" (p. 116).

Limitation to ordinary means of writing apparently brought the Mahatma under frequent exacting criticism, which he humbly deprecates in a few apologetic passages.

11. "Could you but know how I write my letters and the time I am able to give to them" (p. 178).

12. "Mistakes—very likely to occur especially when writing as hurriedly as I do" (p. 181).

13. "Writing my letters, then, as I do, a few lines now and a few words two hours later; having to catch up the thread of the same subject, perhaps

The So-Called "Precipitation" Process

with a dozen or more interruptions between the beginning and the end, I cannot promise you anything like Western accuracy" (p. 186).

14. "I write but seldom letters", says K.H.—perhaps the most prolific letter writer of his century—in Letter xxxi, his own twenty-sixth in the series (p. 241). There is no evidence yet of the relaxation of the *Rule* against Precipitation, so we take it the pen is still in function.

15. In Letter xlv a fuller meaning is attached by K.H. to the term "precipitation". It not only covers the chemical deposit of signs on paper in his possession, but the greater marvel involved "when we write inside your closed letters and uncut pages of books and pamphlets in transit" (p. 267). Mr. Sinnett himself confirms this in *The Occult World*. "I have over and over again received direct writing produced on paper in sealed envelopes of my own which was created or precipitated by a living human correspondent."

16. An alternative to Precipitation by the Mahatma himself was dictation to a Chela, either near by or from a distance. Of an instance of the latter kind we shall have to treat at length in a separate Section. Meanwhile we note, in a description of the method by K.H., another acknowledgment of the rigours of "the Rule". "Last year, some of my letters to you were *precipitated*, and when sweet and easy precipitation was stopped—well", etc. (p. 296). We infer from this that at the date of this Letter (lvi) the "sweet and easy" process is still stopped, and we have to go to

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Letter xciii, 126 pages on, for the next and last reference to it, which is a backward glance at "the palmy days of the 'impressions' and 'precipitations'" (pp. 424-5).

A Summary of the Evidence

Let us sum up, in conclusion, the evidence for the remarkable power claimed for the two Masters, and give our opinion upon it.

The attempts by the editors of the Letters to give the rationale of literary precipitation are vague, confused and contradictory. Sometimes the term is used to describe the act of the Adepts in depositing unwritten "writing" on paper; sometimes it covers the act of "mental telegraphy" by an Adept as operator into the mind of a Chela as amanuensis, in which case the letter may be afterwards hand-written; at another time it signifies the penetration of sealed postal envelopes with written matter while they are in the mail-bags of the State. Mr. Sinnett, using terms that Faraday would not have tolerated, says the last kind of writing was "created or precipitated by a living human correspondent". If it was one it could not have been the other; nor could it have been both; for "creation" implies a *new existence* and "precipitation" a *pre-existence*.

Mr. Jinarājadāsa believes, and leads the readers of *The Early Teachings* to believe, that all the Letters in his book were "materialized on the paper by . . . the use of fourth dimensional

The So-Called "Precipitation" Process

space", while the Mahatmas themselves withhold any such explanation. They speak of servilely copying Nature, and acknowledge, more often than any other agency, the familiar arts and instruments of the schoolroom and the office—writing, pens, ink and paper.

If, in this dilemma, we have to make a choice, we lean to the writers' side rather than to the editor's. And what, on the whole, do the writers say? Our extracts have shown. Mahatma Morya refers only once to his brother's power (but present "inability") to precipitate, while he makes no claim to it himself. Koot Hoomi claims the power, but appears to have used it more rarely than has been generally supposed. Our next two Sections will probably show that it might have been to his advantage not to have used it at all.

S E C T I O N X I I I

“THE KIDDLE INCIDENT”

The Mahatma Charged with Plagiarism

IN Section v of this our book, under the heading *The Mahatma's Knowledge*, we quoted a passage in which the writer alluded to the embarrassments likely to arise from his ability to read the “Akasic libraries”, where past, present and even future events were recorded; whence, if care were not taken to note the signs of the times and places, awkward confusions might ensue.

The incident we are about to relate is a case of this kind, which gave the occasion for the Mahatma's confession of his roving habit of mind, which he advanced as an excuse for his having *read in the Akasa, and re-written as his own, some words spoken in a lecture, printed in a journal, and claimed by another man.* In consequence of this lapse, the Mahatma was charged with plagiarism.

The evidence in the case is contained in the following five Mahatma Letters to Mr. Sinnett:

- (a) Letter vi, “The original Kiddle Letter”, received Allahabad, December 10, 1880.
- (b) Letter LV, probably received at Elberfeld, early 1883.
- (c) Letter LXIII, written January, 1884, received London, Summer, 1884.

"The Kiddle Incident"

- (d) Letter LXV, received London, Summer, 1884.
- (e) Letter xciii, "The restored Kiddle Letter", received London, December, 1883.

(a) The story begins with the publication in 1881 of the first edition of *The Occult World*, in which about one-half of Letter vi in the present series was printed (pp. 22-4). The book had not long been out when a certain Mr. Kiddle, a convert to Spiritualism, wrote to one of the journals of that cult (and also to Mr. Sinnett) to say that he was the originator of a passage of about twenty-four lines in the Mahatma's sixth Letter. The painful and ridiculous sequel to this startling claim will now be traced from *The Mahatma Letters* themselves, with a few additions from other sources.

Another Bacon-Shakespeare Mystery

(b) In Letter lv, undated, but probably received by Mr. Sinnett early in 1883, when staying near Madame Blavatsky at Elberfeld, in Germany, there are references by K.H. to a coming crisis in the affairs of the Theosophical Society, and warnings of a number of dangers in the path. "I warned you all through Olcott in April last of what was ready to burst at Adyar, and told him not to be surprised when the mine should be fired" (p. 322).

The above dangers were, however, comparatively small matters; the "storm" was the impending retirement of Madame Blavatsky, a step said to be *directly* due to Mr. Sinnett's publications, in which too little had been made of "the original policy

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

of the T.S.” and too much of “Tibetan brothers and phenomena” (p. 323).

The Mahatma approaches the subject with humble words but a nonchalant air. He admits that “even an ‘adept’ when acting in his body is not beyond mistakes due to human carelessness. . . . There is always that danger if one has neglected to ascertain whether the words and sentences rushing into the mind come all from *within* or whether some may have been impressed from *without*”. Then follows the sentence, already cited, in which the Mahatma, in general terms, admits his “habit of often quoting, *minus* quotation marks”, from the Akasic libraries, of which habit he gives an instance—“as in the Kiddle case”. He will not do this again, however, for he has “received a lesson now on the European plane on the danger of corresponding with western *literati*” (p. 324). Thus the Mahatma tries to laugh the matter off, but his humour gets heavy and embittered when he taunts Mr. Kiddle with ingratitude for having been raised almost from nonentity to fame by this little mistake. The topic, he says, will one day equal in interest “the Bacon-Shakespeare mystery”.

Eastern and Western Plagiarism

(c) Letter LXIII, received in London, 1884, further reviews the “quasi-disastrous” results of the publication of the Mahatmas’ Letters, and their exposition by a non-initiate. “We had tried an experiment and sadly failed!” says K.H. (p. 356), and

"The Kiddle Incident"

goes on to protest strongly against a suggestion to publish any more. "It is neither new 'Kiddle developments' that I seek to avoid, nor criticism directed against my personality, which indeed can hardly be reached; but I rather try to save yourself and Society from new troubles, which would be serious this time" (p. 357).

(d) Letter LXV, following the above, takes up the cry of "plagiarism", which seems to have rent the air of the Lodges for some time past. "We, of Tibet and China know not what you mean by the word" (p. 364), says K.H. in defence, after which, as a proof of the wide divergence between Eastern and Western literary morals, he mentions the great dictionary of *Pai-Wouen-Yen-Fu*, from which everyone is free to take out whole sentences "and to frame them to express his thought". He adds: "This does not apply to the Kiddle case which happened just as I told you." This means that if Mr. Kiddle's phrases had been recorded in this Eastern book instead of in *The Banner of Light*, he would have had to put up with their being taken out whole by any consultant, "*minus* quotation marks"; but since they are not in that great dictionary, he has the right to hale before a judge and jury of "Western *literati*" a Master of the Eastern wisdom.

The position was evidently growing intolerable, and a sudden and angry turn is given to the Letter by the Mahatma's remark to Mr. Sinnett: "For the *Kiddle* business it is your own fault. Why have you printed the *Occult World* before sending it to me

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

for revision? I would have never allowed the passage to pass." Thus the Mahatma's first literary herald to the world, which had been called by him "a little jewel", presented to the Chohan, and discussed at the Lamasery at Ghalaring-tcho, had apparently come from the press with an undetected passage in it, which, on Western literary principles, would be called a case of plagiarism. "Alas, how easily things go wrong", even on the Himalayas!

The Mystery Solved

(e) The "wretched little Kiddle incident" had troubled Mr. Sinnett ever since its occurrence and he constantly had put upon him the duty of explaining it away, a task which the Mahatma at last was taxed his friend's abilities to the utmost, for the reason now to be revealed—*he had not been given the whole truth of the matter.*

It is evident that the Mahatma is himself heartily sick of the Kiddle-Koothumi controversy, which he nevertheless again raises to the rank of a great literary problem, and essays to solve it, finally and authoritatively, in Letter xciii.

The Mahatma first exacts from Mr. Sinnett a pledge to keep the details of the explanation secret, and opens in a vein of pleasant raillery at the expense of his accusers. "Personally, I am indifferent, of course, to the issue. But for *your* sake and that of the Society I may make one more effort to clear the horizon of one of its 'blackest' clouds" (p. 420). Here begins his effort.

"The Kiddle Incident"

"K.H.—it is settled—is a plagiarist". . . . "An alleged 'adept' unable to evolve out of his 'small oriental brain' any idea or words worthy of Plato, turned to that deep tank of profound philosophy, the *Banner of Light*, and drew therefrom the sentences best fitted to express his rather entangled ideas, which had fallen from the inspired lips of Mr. Henry Kiddle!" Apart from the self-accusing mockery in this passage, we are bound to say that we read the facts as stated; a borrowing of some sort had undoubtedly been made, and we cannot think the critics were culpable or malicious in detecting it, and supposing *prima facie* that it had been read by the Mahatma in *The Banner of Light*, if not on the Akasic files at Tzigadze, then perhaps nearer home at Adyar. Since the explanation about to be given to Mr. Sinnett is hedged round with an exacted vow of secrecy, it would seem to have been too recondite for the critics to think out for themselves; therefore the Mahatma's scorn at their own bungling hypothesis is certainly misplaced.

A Poetical Witness

"The decree is pronounced; K.H., whoever he is, has stolen passages from Mr. Kiddle"—this is the proposition advanced for trial by the self-prosecuting Mahatma. The first and only independent witness for the defence is none other than our own John Milton, who somewhere drily observes that "such kind of borrowing as this, *if it be not bettered* by the borrower, is accounted

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

plagiary" (p. 421). We do not know this passage in its place, but if we may trust our ear, it is Milton's own diction, and is likely to be his doctrine too. He is speaking, of course, as an authority in Western literary morals, and his conditional allowance of borrowing *where there is bettering* was based, no doubt, on the notorious practice of a poet whom in a sonnet he endears with the title "my Shakespear".

Milton's expert evidence is evidently intended to convey the subtle suggestion that although the Mahatma had borrowed from Mr. Kiddle, he had at the same time "bettered" him, and was more to be thanked than blamed. Therefore "on such grounds my literary *larceny* does not appear very formidable after all". The affair does not seriously disturb the Mahatma's mind; indeed, in some of its aspects, it is still a laughing matter. "The solution is so simple, and the circumstances so amusing, that I confess I laughed when my attention was first drawn to it, some time since. Nay, it is calculated to make me smile even now" (p. 421).

"The Rosetta Stone"

How shall we tell the remainder of this astounding story? It fills seven pages of type in the book, wipes out the previous explanations of the Kiddle Letter, and offers an entirely new one, which it likens to the famous Rosetta Stone, which was, as most of our readers know, the key that unlocked the hidden meanings of the Egyptian hieroglyphs. We must

"The Kiddle Incident"

abbreviate the Mahatma's own story, and tell it for the most part—if our readers will trust us—"minus quotation marks", in the form of a narrative.

About December 10th, 1880, when Mr. Sinnett was at Allahabad, he received from the Mahatma Letter vi, beginning abruptly "No, you do not write too much", showing that the Englishman's last letter was at the moment in the Tibetan Master's mind or hand. Guided by Mr. Sinnett's letter, the Mahatma passes from point to point of the correspondents' mutual interests. We pass over these details, and come to the concluding passage. The whole Letter is rounded off with twenty-four lines of not very original philosophic verbiage, beginning "*Plato was right*" and ending "*this material speck of dirt*" (p. 24). These twenty-four lines include and constitute Mr. Kiddle's "claim". He says they were spoken by him in a lecture, and reported in a journal.

Three Years After

How was it that the mistake arose? The "Kiddle" Letter, says the Mahatma, was framed in his mind while he was on a journey and on horseback. It was dictated mentally "in the direction of" a not very expert young Chela, who, in precipitating it, omitted half and distorted the rest. Imprudently enough, it was not corrected by the Mahatma, but was sent off—and forgotten. The Mahatma was physically very tired at the time by a ride of forty-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

eight consecutive hours, and was half asleep. Besides, he had important psychic business to attend to, and was pressed for time.

The Mahatma goes on to say that he had never evoked Mr. Kiddle's physiognomy, or even heard of his existence, but admits that he had "directed his attention", some two months before, to the annual camping movement of the American Spiritualists, attended, no doubt, by Mr. Kiddle. Some general ideas there uttered had impressed his mind, and among these, apparently, those of Mr. Kiddle, whom he had innocently defrauded by reproducing them in his Letter. The Letter, he admitted, would look suspicious, and lay a foundation for censure, if it had been dictated by him as printed; but this it was not, as has just been stated.

Mental Telegraphy

In order to appreciate the serious result of the deflection of the Mahatma's original ideas by in-expert reception and transcription, it is needful that we know the details of the process of dictation in a normal case, where the receiver and transcriber is expert, and where the sender is wide awake, not exhausted by a journey on horseback, nor pre-occupied with other psychic matters, nor pressed for time. Therefore the following explanation is given of the rationale of "Mental Telegraphy".

1. The sender is active, the receiver passive. The sender holds the ideas firmly in his own brain,

“The Kiddle Incident”

whence they arise instantaneously in the receiver's brain.

2. The rationale of Mental Precipitation is this: the image or idea just mentioned as arising in the receiver's brain is transferred upon, or rather into, the paper, correctly or otherwise according to the closeness of attention given to it by the sender or receiver or both. (This is a matter that it will be proper to look into more closely in our examination of the manuscripts.)

The Restored Version

If we accept the Mahatma's story, we are now in a position to understand why half of his originally conceived ideas did not come through, and the rest were blurred. Something had gone wrong with the mental telegraphic system, and the message would have to be repeated.

The “restored version” of the passage given in *The Mahatma Letters* (p. 425) contains fifty-four instead of twenty-four lines. It includes almost all the words of Mr. Kiddle's “claim”, and places them in their original order, *but with interpolations of other matter which deprive them of their original sense*. As compensation for the original robbery, the old words, taken with their new conjunctions, not only make a new sense, but an opposite sense; they set up a vigorous argument against the cult of Spiritualism to which Mr. Kiddle had been converted! Between his patronizing sentence “Plato

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

was right" and the characteristic dictum of transcendental philosophy: "Ideas rule the world", the tell-tale "Rosetta Stone" throws nine lines of italic matter on the "grotesquely perverted views and notions" of the Spiritualists.

To make this point clear we print a few lines of the "restored fragments", recovered by the Mahatma's investigation; the italic passages are those which the inexpert chela and the exhausted Mahatma between them are said to have dropped out of Letter vi; the remainder are claimed by Mr. Kiddle.

"Plato was right to re-admit every element of speculation which Socrates had discarded. The problems of universal being are not unattainable or worthless if attained. But the latter can be solved only by mastering those elements that are now looming on the horizon of the profane. Even the Spiritualists, with their mistaken, grotesquely perverted views and notions are hazily realizing the new situation. They prophesy and their prophecies are not always without a point of truth in them, of intuitional pre-vision, so to say. Hear some of them re-asserting the old, old axiom that "Ideas rule the world", etc. (p. 425).

And so the "restoration" goes on for forty more lines, and the Mahatma concludes: "This is the true copy of the original document as now restored —the 'Rosetta Stone' of the Kiddle incident" (p. 426).

The case of Kiddle *versus* Koot Hoomi had dragged on in Mr. Sinnett's correspondence, the psychical journals and the Theosophical Lodges, for three years, which was much longer than the

"The Kiddle Incident"

time taken by the two Tichborne trials. Plagiarism or wilful borrowing of literary matter had been alleged against an omniscient Mahatma, involuntary "Akasic reading" had been admitted by him as an excuse, and "bettering" pleaded in extenuation. Yet the case was far from being settled. The next Section will show it still under discussion, in the private and public writings of Madame Blavatsky.

SECTION XIV

"THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT"

An Official Excuse for the Kiddle Blunder

THE Section entitled "The Kiddle Incident" terminates with what seems like a triumph of the Mahatma, if not over Mr. Kiddle, at least over those Theosophical doubters whose murmurs had stirred their Master to a condescending and somewhat laboured explanation. The present Section is separated from the foregoing one because it deals with a second and an official excuse for the "Incident", which followed so hard on the heels of the Mahatma's secret effort as to suggest its insufficiency.

As already mentioned, the explanation of the Kiddle mystery embodied in Letter xciii was not to be made public. "I have done, and you may now, in your turn, do what you please with these facts, except the making use of them in print or even speaking of them to the opponents, save in general terms" (p. 427).

Why this secrecy and caution? Was it suspected that the Mahatma's tortuous apology, if published, would neither "go down" with the critics nor satisfy the minds of loyal disciples, who had waited for it for years? We cannot tell, but in any case it was not long before the interdict on its publication was removed, and in a very strange manner. In

"The Original Document"

Letter xciv, following immediately the 9½ pages just reviewed, and written a few weeks later, K.H. says: "Amid the arduous labours it has pleased the venerable Chohan to entrust me with—I had entirely forgotten the 'Kiddle incident'." Fortunate Master, to be so burdened with duties as to obtain oblivion of this long-remembered and wretched matter in three weeks! What would not many of his disciples have given to be able to forget it in as many years? Yet so much at ease is the Mahatma, that he not only revokes the charge of secrecy, but informs Mr. Sinnett that the secret he had carefully kept has already been revealed to other persons. The half-true "line of argument" he had given to the "gifted editor of the *Theosophist*", to be worked up into printed pabulum to satisfy startled readers, has been supplemented by the rest of the facts. Says the Mahatma: "The several letters and articles in the *Theosophist* given out with my permission by General Morgan, Subba Row and Dharani Dhu may pave the way for you" (p. 429).

Alarm at the T.S. Headquarters

Thus anticipated at Headquarters, Mr. Sinnett had no option but to print "the restored fragments" of Letter vi in the next edition of *The Occult World*, with the testimonies above mentioned from *The Theosophist* for December, 1883. Headquarters, he says, had come into possession of the true facts of the case. To the official journal Subba Row had contributed "a very cautiously worded article,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

hinting at the actual explanation". . . . "Somebody must have blundered". . . . The Letter was "unconsciously altered through the carelessness and ignorance of the chela by whom it was precipitated". . . . "I now assert (writes Subba Row) that I know it for certain, from an inspection of the original precipitated proof, that such was the case." General Morgan adds his evidence that "many a passage was entirely omitted from the letter received by Mr. Sinnett", and Mr. Sinnett himself makes the comment: "The public would be treated to a rare sight—namely an akasic impression as good as a photograph of mentally expressed thoughts dictated from a distance" (*Occult World*, 3rd Edition, Appendix).

H.P.B. on the Incident

We are told by K.H. that the gifted editor of *The Theosophist* had been "off her head since the Kiddie accusation". For her private feelings on the matter we are fortunately able to refer to *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*. Writing from Adyar, some time in October, 1883, Madame Blavatsky says: "See the grin and fiendish sneer of M. A. Oxon in *Light* on September 8 against the Kiddie accusation. . . . K.H. plagiarising from Kiddie!! . . . And fancy, of what a philosophical importance these Kiddie lines, to be worthy of plagiarism! Next to 'John, bring me my dinner', '*ideas that travel or rule the world*'—have been mentioned since the days of Plato thousands of times" (p. 60).

“The Original Document”

From Adyar, November 17, 1883, Madame Blavatsky again writes: “K.H. plagiarised from Kiddle! Ye Gods and little fishes. And suppose he has not? Of course *they* the subtle metaphysicians will not believe the true version of the story as *I know it*. So much the worse for the fools and Sadducees. . . . Plagiarise from the *Banner of Light*! that sweet spirits’ slop-basin—the asses!” (p. 66).

It should be noted that Madame Blavatsky is in this letter of November 17th making the *first communication to Mr. Sinnett* of the “true version of the story”. The Mahatma’s Letter xciii, just reviewed, *had not yet been written*; nevertheless “the gifted editor” employs by anticipation some of its “strictly private” arguments and phrases. She assumes that the Master “must have good reasons” for keeping his disciple in the dark, and yet thinks it not undutiful to reveal, in a few swift lines, the essence of the explanation that he holds back. When the Letter was *dictated mentally*, she says, the Mahatma and Chela were 300 miles apart; the “young fool”, with the precipitation before him, had misunderstood and skipped “half of the sentences” (p. 66).

How did the gifted editor obtain this “true version”? It appears that “Subba Row”—a Chela at Adyar—“brought to us the original scrap of Kashmir paper (given to him by my Boss) on which appeared that whole page from the letter you published. . . . Why that letter is *but one third* of the letter dictated” (p. 67). Here the apologists are in

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

disagreement with one another and with the facts. In the Mahatma's own excuse it is *one-half*, in the editor's it is *but one-third*; may we repeat that actually the proportion between the disputed passages is twenty-four lines to fifty-four. If we add the undisputed parts of Letter vi, the proportion between it and its "true version" is neither one-half nor one-third, but thirteen-sixteenths.

The Original Scrap of Paper

With the "Kashmir paper" before her, the editor begins an argument on the want of connection between passages in Letter vi, which is so like the Mahatma's own argument (yet to be written) that it breaks off abruptly, as if the writer realized that she was treading on forbidden ground. "Several lines of H.P.B.'s writing have apparently been completely erased (says Mr. Barker in a footnote) and the following note precipitated in K.H.'s handwriting." "*True proof of her discretion! I will tell you all myself as soon as I have an hour's leisure. K.H.*" (p. 67).

H.P.B. concludes: "But since they don't want me to speak of this I better not say a word more lest M. should again pitch into me! To other matters."

"*I better not*"; another "proof of her discretion"!

The Mahatma, as we have seen, found the necessary hour's leisure, wrote Letter xciii to Mr. Sinnett, exacted secrecy in regard to it, but failed to say the secret was already out and would soon be in print. Further, he completely exonerated the

“The Original Document”

Chela, whom the official explanations had blamed, and took all the blame on himself for the unfortunate mistake.

A Brief for the Chela

We must make some effort to bring this tale to an end, for the longer it goes on and the more tellers it employs, the more entangled, contradictory and incomprehensible it becomes. Yet at the risk of stretching this Section to an inordinate length, we must summarize the arguments on behalf of the unnamed Chela, who, by his vows of silence and obedience, was perforce bound to abstain from defending himself.

Let us first “table” the documents in this part of the case, of which there are three.

1. “*The original (akasic) impression*” (p. 422) given by the “Boss” to Subba Row, and shown by him to Headquarters. It ought now to be lying in the archives at Adyar, *if it is anywhere*.
2. *The so-called imperfect copy of this, made by the Chela* (No. vi in Mr. Barker’s collection). “The letter in your possession was written by the chela.” “Bear in mind, also the ‘O.L.’s’ emphatic denial at Simla that my *first letter* had ever been written by *myself*” (p. 424).*
3. *The Mahatma’s own Letter* (No. xciii in Mr. Barker’s collection) “I transcribe them with my own hand this once” (p. 424).*

* For an examination of the handwritings of Letters vi and xciii, see Section xvii, on *The Manuscripts Examined*, p. 224.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Now let us observe that the Chela is charged or credited—it does not matter which—with having been partly responsible for the contents of and omissions from document 2, which he wrote by his Master's dictation somewhere in Tibet, with three hundred miles of space between them. Let anyone read the Letter through and judge whether it is the least unlike, either in matter or manner, all the other Letters in the book signed "K.H." To our mind its seven paragraphs on Precipitation, Indian journalism, Spiritualistic séances, Mr. Hume's character, Occultism, Planetary Spirits and Universal Brotherhood are in the Mahatma's authentic style, and exhibit not the slightest sign of mental weariness on the part of the dictator or inexpertness on the part of the scribe. Indeed, there is no charge that *any portion but the last paragraph* suffers from the inabilities alleged. How was it that only *here* the Master's sleepiness and the "boy's" inexpertness began to tell on the writing, and cause the dropping of "whole sentences" from the original? And why was it that this so-called act of "carelessness" had in its outcome all the evidences of care? How did an anti-spiritualistic argument of fifty-four lines shrink to a philosophical platitude of twenty-four, and not only make sense of a sort, but exactly reproduce ideas which an American Spiritualist was not ashamed to claim as his own? Would not most people call the boy's performance—if it was really his—"expert" rather than "inexpert"?

On the evidence of the documents, and after

“The Original Document”

sifting the statements made in regard to them, we claim acquittal for the Chela. If a more emphatic testimony to his innocence be required, hear in conclusion what his Master says: “When asked by him at the time, whether I would look it over and correct I answered, imprudently, I confess—‘anyhow will do, my boy—it is of no great importance if you skip a few words’ ” (p. 422). Of what weight, then, is the evidence of “the gifted editor” and four favoured residents at Adyar, based though it may have been on reading the “akasic impression” itself, compared with the plain statement of the Mahatma? “Cautiously worded”, indeed, their articles and hints would have to be to outweigh the considered acknowledgment of their Master.

The End of the Incident

The readers of this Section must judge for themselves whether or not the efforts of the Mahatma to drive away from the Theosophical horizon what he calls “one of its blackest clouds” were successful. As we are not writing, nor even studying, the history of the Theosophical Society, we are unable to say how far the Mahatma’s views on the incident were shared by his circle of disciples, and his efforts to clear the matter up supported by them. If M.’s “pitching into” H.P.B. had the silencing effect it was intended to have, a like discretion was in time shown by Mr. Sinnott. As we have said, the “borrowing” from Mr. Kiddle became evident

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

to the victim of it on reading the First Edition of *The Occult World*, and the “explanation” of it appeared in the Third Edition. On consulting the Ninth Edition, now lent out to borrowers in Theosophical Lodges, we find that the whole incident is completely suppressed. Twenty lines of Letter vi are printed on p. 121, whence the author skips the rest—Kiddle matter, Plato and all—and begins again at Letter viii. Looking into the Appendix, where one might expect to find the “explanation” pigeonholed, we find that, too, has vanished. Western prudence has prevailed over Asiatic literary morals and contradictory and confused excuses. “The least said the soonest mended” would have been the wisest policy from the first; but what can suppression do now? Since so much has been said, and so much more based and built upon it in the interval of years, it is doubtful whether even silence can now unsay it.

On the Side of the Sadducees

Seeing that Mr. Sinnett suppressed the evidences, as far as he could, of the Kiddle incident, we can understand the feelings of one of his surviving colleagues, whom we have already quoted, who says that had it been possible, the Mahatmas’ letters would have been kept by the Theosophical Society a perpetual secret.

It may reasonably be asked of us whether, having examined and reviewed this particular problem at considerable length, we have formed an opinion

“The Original Document”

upon its issues. We have already thrown out some of our intuitions on this point, and may now briefly summarize our conclusions. To put it plainly, we are on the side of the Sadducees. We think the writer (or composer) of Letter vi had read *The Banner of Light*, and had borrowed from it the printed words of Mr. Kiddle. On being charged with an act inconsistent with his “inability to err”, he proved himself not enough of a man and too much of a Mahatma to admit the fact. Then, to show that his intention, at any rate, was quite different from his and the Chela’s joint execution, he produced “an original impression” which was meant to prove his case. *We hold this “original” document to have been written after the Kiddle outcry was raised*, and that the hypothesis of an erroneous transcription of it, advanced by its supposed writer and confirmed by Adyar Headquarters, constitutes a daring and ingenious and yet a transparent literary pretence.

It is not enough, however, to prove an act of deception; we must show against whom the charge lies. This we do in the next Section—*The Blavatsky Hypothesis*.

PART III

THE DEMONSTRATION

SECTION XV

THE BLAVATSKY HYPOTHESIS

In the first and second Parts of this book we have been occupied in propounding and elaborating the question on its title page and gathering from several directions the evidence for an answer to it. In this, the third Part, we present in concise form the results of these surveys, and produce facts of sufficient weight to carry our argument to a conclusion. Two Sections (xv and xvi) are devoted mainly to the examination and comparison of the printed Texts of the Blavatsky and Mahatma Letters, and one Section (xvii) to a scrutiny of the original documents. *The conclusion we draw from each of these investigations is that Madame Blavatsky wrote the Mahatma Letters.*

Before we undertake to prove our own hypothesis of the authorship of the Letters, let us re-state the precise terms of the claims made for them by their receivers and compilers, and indicate what part of these claims we propose to disprove.

The statements made about the Mahatmas as men are briefly these: That they belong to a class of human beings called "Adepts", who are endowed with supernormal physical, intellectual and psychic powers, and possess in consequence a knowledge of the universe so vast as to amount to "a species of omniscience".

What are the statements made about the

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Mahatma Letters that we are asked to believe? Briefly, they are three. First, that they were not written by hand, but were produced by an occult process called "precipitation". Second, that they originated in Tibet (and other places) and were sent to their destination "by astral post", otherwise called "the use of fourth dimensional space", and sometimes "precipitation". Third, that the last part of the journey—the delivery of the Letters—was often witnessed as a "phenomenon" by the receivers and others, except in cases where they were quietly and mysteriously placed, or completed their course through the postal service.

We may add the information, gleaned from a few places in the Mahatma Letters, that communications addressed to the Masters by their trustful disciples reached them by metaphysical means similar to those above described. No part of the outward journey, however, was visible. Letters intended for the Mahatmas were at first given to Madame Blavatsky to forward, but later, to avoid suspicion of her agency or interference, they were placed by the senders in a so-called "shrine", whence, it was supposed, they were "taken up" by the Mahatmas' occult powers.

It would be futile, as well as irrelevant to our argument, to challenge on scientific grounds the possibility of the marvellous powers here described being exercised by man. We shall not affront the believers in Mahatmas and Adepts by calling their faith preposterous, but we shall grapple with the definite historical issue as to whether or not

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

the Mahatma Letters were composed and written by the persons and the means alleged. Here we are on ground where the matter can be tested, and we shall be content to gauge the literary productions attributed to the Mahatmas by the common standards of accordance with known fact, consistency of statement, comparison of styles, canons of taste, weight of evidence and credit of witnesses.

Did the Mahatmas Write the Letters?

We are able to dispose of the last of the above points first. Never have there been, nor are there now, any witnesses to the genuineness of the Mahatma Letters. Obviously the present publishers can vouch for nothing, and the editors and compilers can only say from what persons, alive or dead, they received the manuscripts. Messrs. Sinnett and Hume, now deceased, could in life only say positively that they received the Letters "phenomenally" or through the post. *They could not say they knew from whom they came.* On this point the Letters themselves are their only witnesses.

It is a maxim in debate that "the burden of proof (or disproof) rests with the denier". We hardly think that in undertaking a disproof of the genuineness of the Mahatma Letters we are shouldering a "burden" in the literal sense of the term, for we are sure the citations we have linked up into a connected story in previous Sections have carried the disproof no small distance, and considerably lightened our argumentative load. If our

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

selections and transcriptions have not done them an injustice, the "Adepts" into whose privacy we have been able to look do not conform to the type of high-souled recluses sketched in the various editors' annotations, nor can they compare in character with most of their predecessors on the philosophic and prophetic path. Undignified familiarity and crude humour are among their least objectionable traits, and childish boasts, intellectual and racial pride, bitter resentments and personal abuse are frequent blots on their philosophic pages.

The Letters as Literature

Considered as literature, the Mahatma Letters are probably inferior in style to any other productions of their class. They are entirely lacking in the art of carrying conviction, and many of their artifices to this end are transparent even to an unsuspecting reader. Only a few of them are dated or addressed, a fact which may be read either as unworldly carelessness or secretive care, and the occasional picturesque narrations and topographical details sprinkled in the correspondence are so uncircumstantial as to impress the imagination less than the tales of Sinbad.

Whatever may be said for the philosophy of the Letters on the ground of its truth and the force of its expression, it is entirely lacking in beauty of presentation. From these turgid pages *not one memorable passage has emerged as a quotable text or*

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

maxim after fifty years of faith, which fact justifies the cautious corrections and revisions of such parts as were at first made known, and explains the annoyance expressed in some quarters at their complete disclosure. It is true these Letters were not written for publication to the world, therefore their writers could afford to neglect the formal perfections of the scriptures and philosophies which they always scornfully abused. But now that they are at last presented to be read by the world, they cannot escape the ordeal of a trial and the shame of a comparison.

Errors and Deceptions

If the formal imperfection of the Letters is to be passed over as of little importance, the same plea cannot be made for the astonishing number of palpable errors they contain. Why are these omniscient Mahatmas familiar with the seven heavens and the corona of the sun, and at sea in their English tenses? Why do they write from Tibet to an Englishman in India in the thought basis of Paris and the street locutions of New York? Further, we must press home the question as to why, being Indians, they are unable clearly to expound Indian philosophy, but fall into inextricable confusions, and do not scruple to falsify verifiable documents in pursuit of an "eclectic" propaganda? We must also ask why, being the only known possessors of the power of "precipitating" letters and sending them through space, the

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Mahatmas made tantalizing disclosures of the technique of the process to their one trustful pupil, and saddled him with the responsibility of giving an unintelligible theory of it to the world? Was it to draw off suspicion from another hand that this account of the origin of the Mahatma Letters was put forth?

Lastly, we ask why an omniscient Mahatma, endowed with the treasures of great dictionaries, archaic books and akasic records, walked unwarily into the pit of plagiarism, and gave out as his own thoughts some words "not only pronounced by modern lips but already written and printed" by another man—"as in the Kiddle case"? And why, when found out, did he make light of the slip, and frame, at the suggestion of Adyar Headquarters, a shuffling explanation that proved so incredible that it had to be erased from Theosophical records?

The above is the substance of the evidence obtained from the Mahatma Letters themselves in disproof of the Mahatma thesis. No Mahatmas could have written such letters. Nevertheless, they were written; if not by the Mahatmas, then by whom? So far we have submitted evidence tending to disproof; we now give positive proof that they were the work of another hand.

Mr. Sinnett's Pros and Cons

From the circumstances in which the Mahatma Letters began to appear in India in the year 1880, it was almost certain that a "Blavatsky hypo-

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

thesis" of one kind or another would be advanced, and when the first set of them were published in England, the question was raised by critics in both countries as to the possibility of Madame Blavatsky having been instrumental in their production. The problems presented were of two kinds: one was concerned with the means of the delivery of the Letters, and the other with an alleged affinity between the literary styles of Madame Blavatsky and the Mahatmas. In later editions of *The Occult World* Mr. Sinnett dealt with the first point quite frankly. His own letters to the Mahatmas were handed to or sent to Madame Blavatsky to be "forwarded"; and since theirs to him were in many cases received "while she was in the house with me, it was not mechanically impossible that she might have been the writer" (*O.W.*, pp. 99, 100). A glance at a few of Mr. Sinnett's memoranda on the Letters will confirm the above remark.

Letter vii. Enclosed in Mad. B's from Bombay. Received January 30th, 1881.

Letter viii. Received through Mad. B. About February 20th, 1881.

Letter ix. Received on return to India, July 8th, 1881, while staying with Madame B. at Bombay.

Notes associating the Letters with Madame Blavatsky become more rare as time goes on, but internal references here and there indicate the place and circumstances of their despatch and reception. In any case a large number came in the ordinary way through the post.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

H.P.B. as Forwarding Agent

There was no secret as to the agency of Madame Blavatsky in transmitting, through ordinary postal channels, the Letters and messages which were said to reach her "phenomenally". Here are a few passages from *The Blavatsky Letters* bearing on this point.

- p. 4 Letter ii from H.P.B. to A.P.S. is over-written by a note of the same length from K.H.
- p. 5 Letter iv begins: Ordered by my Boss to tell Sinnett Esq., the following:—
- p. 6 Letter v is over-written by K.H.
- p. 21 Letter xii begins: There's a love chit for you just received . . . well there's a letter from Mahatma K.H. also.
- p. 28 Letter xv begins: As K.H. just kindly flopped on my nose a whole *Iliad* to your address you will not care to read my letter.
- p. 39 Letter xix ends: Boss gives you his love—I saw him last night at the Lama's house.
- p. 69 Letter xxx has comments and a postscript written by M.
- p. 73 Letter xxxi begins: By order of my Boss I send you the Kingsford Letters.
- p. 77 Letter xxxii ends: At this very instant I receive a letter for you. I enclose it.

We may judge from these notes that Mr. Sinnett's formula "not impossible" must apply not only to those Letters received while she was in the house with him, but to every communication of the above kind of which she was known to be the transmitter.

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

It is important to notice that in Letters II and V above the Mahatma's over-writings bear no relation to H.P.B.'s letters which they cover. Hence the suggestion is that her agency in the transmission is involuntary; the Mahatma's writing would be described either as "osmosis" or "precipitation". Letter XXX to Mr. Hume, "with a facsimile precipitation of A.O.H.'s own writing", may be a similar case (p. 228).

"A Mere Absurdity" . . . "Perfectly Unlike"

Investigation at this date into the question of the mechanical possibility or otherwise of Madame Blavatsky having written the Letters can hardly be fruitful of satisfactory results, so we turn to the other side of the problem above mentioned, that is, to the question of the resemblance of literary styles. Says Mr. Sinnett: "For me, knowing her as I did, the inherent evidences of the style were enough to make the suggestion that she might have written them a mere absurdity." And again: "*Koot Hoomi's Letters . . . are perfectly unlike her own style*" (*O.W.*, p. 100, 9th ed.).

We do not intend to leave the question of the resemblance of styles resting in the balances of Mr. Sinnett's judgment, but propose to allow the Letters of Madame Blavatsky and the Mahatmas to speak for themselves in a series of comparisons of words, forms and ideas. The hypothesis we lay down assumes that, of the two groups of Letters to be scrutinized, Madame Blavatsky's are genuine.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Her style is fixed and known, normal and unfeigned; if there is feigning anywhere, it is in the Mahatmas' group. The components of the lady's writing are explicable from her personal history; nothing is yet known as to her "Master" and her "Boss".

H.P.B.'s and the Mahatmas' Languages

H. P. Blavatsky was a native of Russia, and a member of the aristocratic class, whose second language, as a matter of course, was French. From her childhood she was also taught English; she visited England in 1844, and again in later years. As between her two acquired languages, therefore, French was the first implanted, and naturally enough was never eradicated from her mind. It remained to the last an underlying component of her literary style. Externally, she was acquainted with English, but never obtained the mastery of it; years of practice made her a fluent, but not a faultless writer. Her travels abroad and residence in America superposed on her Russian, French and English linguistic possessions an American and cosmopolitan element that was suited to her mind and mission.

Biographical details of the two Mahatmas' careers are naturally less abundant and explicit than those concerning Madame Blavatsky. Throughout this book, and especially in Sections iv and v, we have given their life-stories as far as we have been able to trace them. With regard to their knowledge

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

of languages, we cannot be wrong in assuming them to be most proficient in their native tongues, and skilled in the acquirement of Sanskrit, Tibetan and other Asiatic speech; but of these abilities little or no evidence is given in the Letters; indeed, a few scraps of Oriental writing are not without faults. English is in substance their only speech, much of which is based internally on French, with large infusions of American and cosmopolitan expressions. Of these facts we have given ample proof in Section xi.

Mr. Sinnett's judgment as to the dissimilarity of the styles now being considered must be qualified by another no less emphatic opinion which he gives of the Mahatma K.H.'s style, compared with what might reasonably be expected of him. "The more my readers will be acquainted with India, the less will they be willing to believe, except on the most positive testimony, that the letters of Koot Hoomi, as I now publish them, have been written by a native of India" (*O.W.*, p. 86, 9th ed.). We have no difficulty in confirming this observation, and the same may be said of Mahatma Morya, whose letters were not printed in *The Occult World*. The characteristics of the three writers now to be judged—Madame Blavatsky and her Masters—must be admitted to be similar in one respect at least; that is, they are all Western stylists, in so far as they can be said to have any style at all.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The Two Texts

The places from which we take the examples for comparison are the following:

1. Letters, diaries and notes written by H. P. Blavatsky in America between 1875 and 1879, before sailing to India; with other matter printed in *The Theosophist*, 1923-4-5.
2. *Isis Unveiled*, published in New York, 1877.
3. Letters of H. P. Blavatsky in the Appendix to *The Mahatma Letters*.
4. *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky* to A. P. Sinnett, 1880-8.

Extracts from the above matter, being Madame Blavatsky's undisputed compositions, will be set down first; after which matter from *The Mahatma Letters* will be compared with them, and similarities and parallels noted. These comparisons will fall into five classes (1) English words and expressions; (2) English expressions based on French idiom; (3) Miscellaneous parallels; (4) Minor Characteristics; (5) Biblical references.

Words and Key-words

We begin the examination of English words and expressions by selecting, after the manner of a primer, three words of one syllable; words which may seem, in the estimation of some, to be "mean and small"—as Bacon would say—but which will prove, we think, to be discoverers of greater things. These words are *Try*, *But*, and *Though*.

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

I. Try

In *The Theosophist* for April, 1923, Mr. Jinarājadāsa prints the eighth instalment of fragments entitled *The Early History of the T.S.* Herein is a letter from H.P.B. to Colonel Olcott, dated Philadelphia, 21st May, 1875, in which the following sentences occur, exactly as here printed.

- (1) I have been intrusted with an arduous and dangerous task Harry to "try" and teach you, having to rely solely on my poor, lame English.

The lesson certainly begins in lame English, but it goes on into something like galloping Egyptian, if it is not mere jargon, for another sentence reads as follows:

- (2) "Try", and from the red of *Elementary Region*—of Cherubim, progress towards the *Osiris* the highest *Ethereal One*, the "Empyraeum"—Sphere of *Tera-phim*.

After more matter in this style the writer considerately observes: "That will do I guess for lesson the 1st", and proceeds to discuss more urgent and mundane affairs.

Certain "teachings" from another hand and another quarter, promised by H.P.B. in the foregoing letter, duly arrived (*via Philadelphia*) but we need only examine them here in respect of the one word that concerns us—*Try*. Here are ten examples of it; all but one are underlined.

- (3) He who seeks us finds us. *Try*. Rest thy mind.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- (4) Don't give up thy club. *Try*.
- (5) Try to win the Bostonian youth's confidence.
- (6) He did *try* to find you the books.
- (7) what you in your unselfish, noble exertions *try* to do for the cause.
- (8) depart from hence in peace and *try* to utilize thy time.
- (9) Use your intuition, your innate powers; *try* you will succeed.
- (10) Lose not a day, *try* to settle her.
- (11) *Try* to dissipate in her gloom.
- (12) *Try* to have her settled by *Tuesday eve*—and wait.

The writer of Nos. 1 and 2 of the above "trys" is Madame Blavatsky. The alleged writer of the remaining ten is "SERAPIS", a Brother of the "Luxor Lodge" in Egypt, who is supposed to have sent his teachings to Madame Blavatsky by the same means that the Mahatmas afterwards sent theirs, that is, through "fourth dimensional space". We need not go out of our way at present to show that these communications from the Nile to New York constituted a small rehearsal of the larger and later drama played between Tibet, India and Europe. The only point to notice here is the first historical occurrence—in the opening letter of H.P.B. and the "Serapis" sequence—of the singular expression—"Try".

We meet this key-word next in a letter of H.P.B.'s, printed in *The Theosophist* for April, 1924, containing this sentence (p. 246): "Try and find it out if you can." It occurs again in the same number (p. 248): "Try and keep off the job till

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

then if you can." A letter from H.P.B. (*M.L.*, p. 475)—"Do, please do *try* and have intuition"—echoes No. 9 above from SERAPIS. From *The Blavatsky Letters* we take our last examples:

- p. 10 I will write or *try* to write a more detailed and *sane* letter.
p. 68 My Boss has said between two pipes—*Try*.

A Laconian indeed, in whom there is no waste of words; yet has he not here spoken one word too much?

Parallels from the Mahatmas

We have just noticed the mannerism "try" occurring *seventeen times* in the Blavatsky-Serapis correspondence, and we now show it occurring *ten times*, exactly as below, in K.H.'s Letters to Mr. Sinnett.

- M.L.*, p. 6 *Try*—and first work upon the material you have.
p. 20 But I say—*Try*. Do not despair.
p. 247 we have one word for all aspirants : **TRY**.
p. 286 Yet—I may try—some day to get you one.
p. 297 Try also, to well understand the situation.
p. 341 let him—*Try*.
p. 348 at all events *Try*.
p. 348 But still—*Try*.
p. 429 *Try*, for something may come out of it.
p. 452 You ought to go to Simla. **TRY**.

2. *But*

We now call attention to the peculiar uses of the word "but" in the Blavatsky and Mahatma Letters.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

This word, used in the sense of "only", "except" and "merely", was much used in nineteenth-century literature, and we believe it is still so used more often in America than in England. This may explain its frequent employment by Madame Blavatsky. The first three of the following instances belong to her transatlantic era, and the remainder to the Blavatsky Letters.

The Theosophist, May 24th, p. 798. "John told me but afterward".

Isis Unveiled, pp. 589, 590: "but Salt Lakes"; "vary but in artificial modes".

Blavatsky Letters.

- p. 9 I found but *your* letter to *me*.
- p. 16 It reached Damodar but Sunday.
- p. 19 O'Conor would have but sneered.
- p. 29 I have of course but to shut up.

A dozen examples of "but" from *The Mahatma Letters* will show that the Oriental occultists were certainly Occidental stylists in the use of this adaptable little word.

- p. 34 four bottles had but just been brought back empty (Footnote by The "Disinherited").
- p. 61 *materia prima* of science exists but in their imagination.
- p. 75 will awake but when his fourth principle . . . is matured.—M.
- p. 131 to awake but at the hour of the last judgment.
- p. 141 distinct but in their respective manifestations.
- p. 180 act freely but on condition—
- p. 211 such proofs as we generally give but to those—

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

- p. 215 did not safely cross so many ages but to find themselves wrecked.
- p. 218 attracted but to *primary facts*—M.
- p. 220 an affair concerning but the Chohan.—M.
- p. 250 calculated but to exonerate himself only.
- p. 310 Our chelas are helped but when they are innocent.

3. *Though*

In Section XII, dealing with the *Precipitation Process*, we mentioned the inexplicable remark of Mahatma M.: “Cannot write English with a brush though”, and we commented on the technical problems it presented. Our interest in the sentence now is grammatical, and we give a few examples of Madame Blavatsky’s use of its last word. Her habit was, like her Master’s, to put “though” at the end of a sentence, without a preceding comma. Below are some examples of this use from both hands.

(H. P. Blavatsky)

The Theosophist, 4/24: One thing I can tell you though.

Isis Unveiled, p. 621 more than probable though.

B.L., p. 9 He must have prigged your letter though.

p. 117 We see each other very little though.

p. 180 One thing funny though.

M.L., p. 469 Instead of accepting the proposal though.

(The Mahatmas)

M.L., p. 204 with the greatest discretion and caution though.

p. 210 All I could obtain from Him, though—

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- M.L., p. 259 Now that we are dead and dessicated
tho',—
p. 268 The cause will never be ruined though—
p. 274 There are more than one such hint
though;—
p. 303 sever his connection with the Society
altogether, though;
p. 441 M. promised me though to refresh her
failing memory—

Our last instance is a peculiar one. In Letter cxxxiv Madame Blavatsky writes to Mr. Sinnett from Dehru Dun, and in her opening sentences takes down an alleged dictation from Mahatma Morya. M. begins: "I wrote to Sinnett my opinions on the Allahabad theosophists." H.P.B., the scribe, interrupts the dictator with this prompt comment: "(Not through me though?)" (p. 461).

Here we close our search among the one-syllabled key-words, and summarize its results.

- Try* . . Blavatsky, 7; Serapis, 10; Koot Hoomi, 10.
But . . Blavatsky, 7; Mahatamas, 12.
Though . . Blavatsky, 7; Mahatmas, 8.

These are somewhat frequent and significant similarities in writings which were said by Mr. Sinnett to be "perfectly unlike" in style.

Two Grammatical Licences

We now cull from the two collections some examples of ungrammatical usages frequently occurring. The first is what is known as "the split infinitive"—

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

"to either answer it or not", and the second consists in the dropping of the auxiliary verb—"You better try".

The Split Infinitive

(H. P. Blavatsky)

- B.L., p. 21 to instinctively so to say,
p. 30 comes to nearly feel sick.
p. 73 I send you the Kingsford letters to fondly
read.
p. 98 useless to either write—
p. 110 to either follow the dictates—
p. 114 never been allowed to even look—
p. 116 to either use it or give it.
p. 139 powerless to even prove—

From *Isis Unveiled*

- p. 527 made to unwillingly confess—
p. 599 to safely find his way back—

(The Mahatmas)

- M.L., p. 17 to precipitately change—
p. 22 to first arrange our sentences—
p. 39 you will fail to easily find help.
p. 40 to completely subject to themselves—
p. 47 to there assume animal form.
p. 63 to better understand the difficulty.
p. 67 begins to gradually die out.
p. 75 he has to either proceed onward—
p. 202 to totally exempt the far richer London
members.
p. 203 to gradually prepare the way for others.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The Dropped Auxiliary Verb

(H. P. Blavatsky)

- B.L., p. 18 you better not pooh-pooh my advice.
I rather not convert them.
- p. 35 K.H. and M. thought I better apologize.
- p. 67 I better not say a word more.
- p. 93 you better profit by his presence.
- p. 151 I better be hung than mention it.
- p. 179 You better give up the . . . Memoirs.
- p. 191 you better write to him a kind letter.
- p. 197 I rather spend a pound or two—
- p. 217 you better stop before you kill me.

(The Mahatmas)

- M.L., p. 18 you better not let him know you have
read this letter,
- p. 26 you better write to me—
- p. 156 I better give you a few more details—
- p. 159 and they better learn it.
- p. 316 and you better learn it at once,
- p. 420 I rather have the real *facts*.
- p. 420 I rather not be regarded as a deliberate
artificer and a *liar*—
- p. 438 you better try to make your friend and
colleague—

Franco-English Phrases

In undertaking to demonstrate the existence of a French basis common to the Blavatsky and Mahatma writings, we shall at first save the labour of collecting one side of the parallels by recalling

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

the attention of our readers to Section xi, on *The Style and Construction of the Letters*, where we showed the Tibetan Masters to be much more proficient writers of French than of English. Indeed, they realize this themselves, for one of them (Morya) using the motto: *Ou touts ou rien*, says he learnt it from the other, whom he calls "my frenchified K.H.". The thirty or more examples of French basis which we gave in the former Section will serve for the Mahatmas' column in the proposed comparison, against which we shall now cite examples from Madame Blavatsky. Having done this, we shall add proof to proof by drawing up a supplementary list of "frenchified" forms from the Mahatma Letters. Thus the Theosophical founder will be placed between two fires, the second of which will be somewhat more deadly than the first, because of its comprising not only similarities of language, but exact parallels in Franco-English phrase. As with the examples already given, we set the English words, which we hold to have a French basis, in italics, and place their French equivalents in brackets.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Franco-English Parallels

(H. P. Blavatsky)

The Theosophist, September '24, p. 794. The progress of Theosophy at (à) Paris.

- B.L., p. 43 Olcott is at (à) Ceylon; (p. 51) Why did you invite malignant fools at (à) your conversazione? (p. 190) When I arrived to (à) Alexandria.
- p. 51 I do not care a (un) twopence.
- p. 57 Why we have *made* (fait) miracles.
- p. 98 I have never been allowed to see *one single* (un seul) of those letters; *M.L.*, p. 470 . . . that they have never written *one single* (un seul) of the letters ever received.
- p. 147 No one would dare, save in *under breath* (à voix basse) to say a word against me.

Isis Unveiled (II, p. 382) . . . this *meloman* (mélomane) of the desert.

- B.L., p. 174 . . . by the uninitiated world and *every profane* (tous les profanes)

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

Franco-English Parallels

(The Mahatmas)

- M.L.*, p. 9 the British Theosophical Society *at* (à) London (p. 350) the Theosophists *at* (à) Paris.
- p. 221 Whether Mr. Hume "cares *a* (un) twopence," p. 223 Mr. Hume will not care *one* (un) twopence.
- p. 444 I cannot *make* (faire) a miracle.
- p. 461 never given up caste or *one single* (un seul) of their customs.
- p. 294 I hear you uttering *under breath* (voix basse)
- p. 189 many other true artists and *melomans* (mélomanes)
- p. 4 were they given *to the profanes* (aux profanes)
- B.L.*, p. 376 *The profane* (le profane) cannot become a purified soul, for he lacks means, etc.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

No reader of the above displayed passages will doubt that the Mahatmas K.H. and M., from whose pens those on the right side are supposed to have flowed, were "frenchified" to an extraordinary degree for persons born in the Asiatic continent. If, however, as we are arguing in this Section, the Mahatmas were not born in any other continent than the imagination of Madame Blavatsky, the problem of their "frenchification" presents no difficulty.

Blavatsky's Second Language

By way of relaxation from the rigours of mere comparison, let us recount four philological stories which show Madame Blavatsky and her Master using similar Franco-English terms instead of more correct and suitable English ones.

1. *Commentaries*.—The first is an incident mentioned by Mr. Sinnett in *The Occult World* (p. 95). On one occasion he had given Madame Blavatsky a letter to be forwarded to Mahatma K.H. After a little while it was handed back to him with these words pencilled on the envelope: "Read and returned with thanks, and a few commentaries." Mr. Sinnett adds that these words in K.H.'s usual hand were "written unconsciously" by H.P.B., the suggestion being that they were really a mediumistic message from the Mahatma. If so, why did K.H. make the hand of his Chela write the "frenchified" word "*commentaries*" (from *commentaires*) instead of "comments" or "remarks", which are English?

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

For the same reason, we suppose, that he uses it himself in Letter xxiv. "Pity you have not followed your quotation with personal commentaries" (p. 189).

2. *Offered*.—Our second story is from *Isis Unveiled* (Vol. II, p. 626). Madame Blavatsky, while travelling in Tartary, noticed a small talisman on the arm of her guide, a "Shaman", or magician of that country. In recording the event she makes this curious remark: "Of what use is it to you was the question we often offered to our guide." "Offered" a question? Why not "asked", "put" or "proposed" a question—all good English words in one sense or another? The reason is evident; the writer is translating mentally from the French expression "offrir une question", and rendering it (incorrectly, as it seems) "to offer a question".

A fact more remarkable, and more to our present point, is that the Mahatmas themselves frequently use "offer" in the same sense as their Chela. Here are a few examples:

M.L., p. 7 offering to me a few questions.

p. 8 the teacher anxious to disseminate his knowledge, and the pupil offering him to do so.

p. 150 a pertinent question, offered moreover in a quite Christian spirit.

p. 256 he had never consented to give up his notions, though offered more than once.

p. 299 Mr. Hume's often expressed offer to became a chela.

3. *Meloman*.—While we are wandering in strange

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

linguistic lands, it will be appropriate to take from *Isis* (p. 382) another of Madame Blavatsky's references to her travels in Tartary. In recording her encounter with a man of great musical talent, she writes of him as "this meloman of the desert". If the story had been told in French, the word "mélomane" would have been used; in English the only word from that root which our dictionary and literature allow is "melomaniac". This word is avoided by the Chela, writing in 1877, and by the Master, writing five years later; for when he is expatiating to Mr. Sinnett on a musical theme, he writes of the bliss of the "melomanic" and of "the King of Bavaria and many other true artists and melomans" (*M.L.*, pp. 188-9).

4. *Profane*.—In Section xi we mentioned the strange use made by the Mahatma K.H. of the word "profanes" (p. 4), which is a French plural noun, for which "the profane" has to do duty in English. Madame Blavatsky makes the same mistake when she writes "by the uninitiated world and every profane" (*B.L.*, p. 174); thinking, no doubt, that "profane" in English is singular, and equivalent to "profane man" or "profane person". Again misled by French forms, the Mahatma employs an English plural term as a singular, when he writes: "The profane cannot become a purified soul, for he lacks means, etc." (*A.P.S. notebook*, *B.L.*, p. 376).

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

Sixteen Miscellaneous Parallels

The two following columns will be seen to contain passages taken from the Blavatsky and Mahatma letters showing astonishing correspondence in respect of words, feelings, and ideas.

(H. P. Blavatsky)

- B.L., p. 6 Even an Anglo-Indian can have the true S... *spark* in him which no amount of brandy and soda and other stuff can extinguish.
- p. 7 an editorial remark upon the *foolish* para; p. 81 the last para. on p. 17.
- p. 11 It's a skunk of a sewer like the *C. and M. Gazette*; p. 50 even such a skunk as he is.
- p. 24 So let us drop it; p. 56 Let us drop it.
- p. 31 why should I be sacrificed, be offered in a holocaust to the Lord God of Israel.
- p. 33 K.H. *forbid* me to send it to him; p. 163 He expressly *forbid* spending such amount of money.
- p. 38 the same eternal "gul-gul" sound of my Boss's inextinguishable chelum pipe.
- p. 47 a Grandison with 8 illegitimate children calling him father.
- p. 79 *Mea culpa*; p. 236 I have to make *mea culpa* before Katkoff; (M.L.), p. 460 say *mea culpa* before all the Theosophists.
- p. 90 his voice said "you will write to him so and so"; p. 239 telling *thusly*: "say to Isabel Cooper Oakley so and so".
- p. 116 (at the end of a letter) Well I believe I have written a volume.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- B.L.*, p. 130 he who evolved the whole story; p. 238 must thank her stars for evolving spiritual and beautiful characters.
p. 147 to all the ding and clash around me.
Th., p. 248 Your scientists . . . generally howled out "Eureka".

Isis Unveiled (p. 617) Simon Stylite.

Theosophist E.H.T.S. Letter IX. H.P.B. describes an article of hers in an American paper as "*Shot No. 1 at the enemy*".

(The Mahatmas)

- M.L.*, p. 37 It may very likely be *osmosed* into your head . . . if sherry bars not the way, as it has already done at Allahabad; p. 207 The brandy atmosphere in the house is dreadful.
p. 364 We surround ourselves with hundreds of paras. upon this particular topic.
p. 37 . . . is, I am sorry to say, a true skunk *mephitis*.
p. 228 Let us drop it; M., p. 368 Let us drop the subject; p. 428 Let us drop it for a while.
p. 4 the Church sought to sacrifice Galileo as a holocaust to the Bible; p. 371, plotting and scheming to make us all into a holocaust.
p. 237 I warned whom I had to warn, and forbid strictly my own business being mixed up with it. p. 438 The Chohan *forbid* it;
p. 431 M. writes: I swear I was at Ch-in-ki (Lhassa). Smoking your pipe.

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

- M.L., p. 261 he would have only scorn for a Chesterfield and a Grandison; p. 363 an Indo-Tibetan ascetic playing at Sir C. Grandison; p. 39 the hapless parent of about half-a-dozen of illegitimate brats.
- p. 302 Mea culpa! I exclaim.
- p. 289 "you will write so and so . . . and no more."
- p. 178 (at the end of a letter) And now you had a volume.
- p. 45 Man first evolutes from this *matter*; p. 86 each evolved race in the downward arc; p. 90 but the whole host already evolved; p. 92 the evolved secondary igneous agencies; p. 93 Then the whole universe must be re-evolved *de novo*.
- p. 50 the first hum and ding dong of adverse criticism.
- p. 167 your physicists shout "Eureka!"
- p. 186 a kind of Indo-Tibetan Simon Stylites.
- p. 50 K.H. describes *The Occult World* as "that first serious shot at the enemy".

A Few Comments

Although most of the above parallels are too obvious to need remark, we propose to make comments on a few of them.

Brandy (B.L., p. 6; M.L., p. 37).—A point which frequently arose in the Letters was the fact that Mr. Sinnett was a wine-drinker and a flesh-eater, and therefore debarred from winning the highest prizes of chelaship and initiation. It

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

will be seen that H.P.B., the friend, and K.H., the Master, make similarly facetious references to this personal matter.

Evolute (*B.L.*, p. 130; *M.L.*, p. 45).—The word “evolute” has had an interesting and peculiar employment in the Theosophical movement. In scientific literature it occurs in Newton’s *Principia*, where it is a term in Geometry, and grammatically both a substantive and an adjective, e.g. “an evolute”, “an evolute curve”. At a later date the substantive term “evolution” and its associated verb “to evolve” became household words in Science. It is significant that the first misappropriation of the geometrical substantive “evolute”, by its conversion into the barbaric verb “to evolute”, occurred in Colonel Olcott’s *Buddhist Catechism* in this sentence: “When he has evolved to the stage of true individual enlightenment” (*Occult World*, p. 82). It will be seen in the parallels that the Colonel’s co-founder frequently employed the word in the same novel sense, and that the Mahatmas themselves, in following these examples, were better pupils of the founders than they were of Newton, Darwin, Spencer and Huxley and all the English scientists and grammarians. This, of course, was to be expected, but it is worth noting that Olcott’s and the Mahatmas’ “evolute” is now obsolete in Theosophy; it is everywhere corrected to “evolve” in the Letters as rendered in *The Early Teachings of the Masters*.

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

Grandison (*B.L.*, p. 47; *M.L.*, p. 261).—We have already noted in Section xi that Mahatma K.H. was familiar with the English novelist Richardson, whose *Sir Charles Grandison* is a well-known work. It is a curious fact that both Madame Blavatsky and her Masters have a rather keen scent for unsavoury suggestions whenever they find themselves in personal conflict with Theosophical colleagues or outside enemies. It will be seen, however, that although K.H. makes two references to Sir Charles Grandison, he only debits a departed Theosophist with “about” six illegitimate children, instead of Madame Blavatsky’s definite imputation of eight.

“*Simon*” *Stylites* (*Isis*, p. 61, and *M.L.*, p. 186).—Simeon Stylites was a fifth-century Christian who for the good of his soul and the edification of heathen neighbours spent half a lifetime on the top of a column. Tennyson has written a fine poem about him, but it is remarkable that although the fame of this ascetic has girdled the globe, neither Madame Blavatsky, writing in New York, nor K.H. in Tibet, has quite hit the proper spelling of his name.

Some Minor Characteristics

Having in this Section disposed of Mr. Sinnett’s case for the entire unlikeness of the Blavatsky and Mahatma literary styles, we are enabled to supplement our argument on this point by the evidence

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

of Mr. Jinarājadāsa, Vice-President of the Theosophical Society and trusted archivist of the Adyar Headquarters, as to some of the minor characteristics of H.P.B.'s style. This evidence is all the more valuable from the fact of its being unconsciously tendered, for it is unlikely that the writer would have purposely risked a damaging comparison between the Founder's and the Mahatmas' styles.

In the disclosures constituting "The Early History of the T.S.", printed in *The Theosophist* (June '24, p. 385), this official, so far as we can judge, deals more faithfully than any other editor with the documents he publishes; he affirms that he prints the Blavatsky literary remains without correcting their numerous errors. "H.P.B.'s MSS. (he writes) are not easy to edit, as her punctuation is sometimes erratic . . . she writes 'George Miller of Bristol' for George Müller . . . Theosophy and Theosophists are in most cases written by her as 'theosophy' and 'theosophists'." In another place he mentions her "constant underlinings".

We had already observed the above-mentioned characteristics in the scattered documents coming from the H.P.B. hand, and many of them are still to be found in *The Blavatsky Letters*, in spite of Mr. Barker's admission that he has "permitted himself to correct obvious errors of spelling and punctuation, as these were too numerous to ignore" (Preface, p. 5). It will be seen that in thus clearing the path for the general reader, the compiler has obstructed the course of the critic. Nevertheless

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

the nine untouched Blavatsky Letters in the Mahatma collection suffice to confirm the Vice-President's observations. Their twenty-six pages contain 158 literal errors and 240 faults in punctuation, while the underlinings reach the tragical total of 230.

Comparing the above Letters with a few of the Mahatmas', we may mention as notable instances of bad punctuation Mahatma Letter viii, of 11 pages, which we should have to correct in 57 places; Letter xiii, 8 pages, 50 places; Letter xxx, 11½ pages, 80 places. In respect of underlinings, this Letter takes the palm for emphasis with 120 places.

Liberties with Proper Names

Returning to Mr. Jinarājadāsa's particulars, let us give the reason, unnoticed by him, for H.P.B.'s frequent neglect of capital letters in writing the words "theosophy" and "theosophists". She was translating mentally from the French terms *la théosophie* and *les théosophes*, in which capitals are not required (see Littré). But why should both the Mahatmas do the same, as they do in "theosop. schools", "the theosop. ark" (p. 39), "those Prayag theosophists" (p. 248) and in about thirty other places?

While we thank our official witness for giving us the instance of "George Miller of Bristol", we think he will be surprised at the list we give of mis-spellings of the names of well-known people in the Blavatsky and Mahatma Letters.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

(*H. P. Blavatsky*)

- B.L.*, p. 68 "Carlisle" for Carlyle.
p. 107 "Oscar Wild" for Oscar Wilde.
p. 129 "Leadbeter" for Leadbeater.
p. 211 "Quaridge" for Quaritch.
M.L., p. 469 "Mascul: and Cook" for Maskelyne and Cooke.

(*The Mahatmas*)

- M.L.*, p. 27 "Dupotet" for Du Potet.
p. 66 "Schoppenhauer" for Schopenhauer.
p. 133 "Beacher" for Beecher.
p. 148 "Allan Kardec" for Alan Kardec.
p. 154 "Nordenskiol" for Nordenskiöld.
pp. 247-307 "Carter Block" for Carter Blake.
p. 271 "Wild" for Dr. Wyld.
p. 344 "Beale" for Dr. Beal.
p. 431 "Sutheran" for Sothern.

Indian names fare if possible rather worse than European and American; we shall be content with giving one notable instance of sheer anarchy in spelling. It is the name of Gjual-Khool, K.H.'s pretended Chela, so spelt in his own signature to Letter cxxv. Madame Blavatsky mentions the name twenty-three times, and writes it eight different ways; the Mahatmas reach the same total.

(*H. P. Blavatsky*)

- Djugal Khool. . 3 times
Djwal Khool . . once
Dj. Khool . . twice
D. Khool . . 3 times

(*The Mahatmas*)

- Djugal Khool
Djual Kul
D. J. K.
Djwal K.

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

(*H. P. Blavatsky*)

(*The Mahatmas*)

D. K. . . . 8 times

D. K.

D. Kh. . . . once

D. Kh.

Gjual Khool . . once

Gjual Khool

J. Kool . . twice

Juala Khool

Not once is the name spelt in the manner adopted for this Chela by Mr. Leadbeater—"Djwal Kul". Doubtless the reason for the difference is the comparatively late settlement by learned men of the principles of Oriental transliteration. Still, we fail to see why the Mahatmas, if not their senior pupil, should have been groping for years for a formula with which to name their familiar friend, who seems to have suffered in this respect more variety than "the secret book of Kin-te".

Biblical References

We have elsewhere shown that the attitude of the Mahatmas towards religion in general and Christianity in particular was definitely hostile. This antipathy was extended in a marked manner towards the scriptures of which the Christian Church is the custodian. In Section xi, where we were treating of the literary references in the Mahatma Letters, we postponed the examination of Biblical matter, because it seemed more appropriate that it should find a place in the argument on "the Blavatsky Hypothesis", and undergo comparison with Madame Blavatsky's own *biblia*.

All scriptures are liable to be quoted without identifying the persons who quote them; but if

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

they are misquoted the case is different. Two correct similarities may come from two minds, but two incorrect ones point rather to one mind. We say this because we are about to give instances from H.P.B. and the Mahatmas, in which all but two out of twenty-four citations are incorrect, while several of these are identical on both sides of the parallel.

Blavatsky and the Bible

- B.L., p. 8 All this is vexation of spirit and vanity and nothing else.
(Ecclesiastes i. 14: "*Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.*")
- p. 24 . . . to throw their personalities to the dogs to rent them.
(Matthew vii. 6: "*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*")
- p. 33 The God of Israel who loved his son so well that he sent him to be crucified.
(John iii. 16: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son——*")
- p. 124 One or other of the London Potiphars.
(Potiphar's wives, surely.)
- p. 147 A woman who wrote such a letter must be a Potiphar.
(Again, a Potiphar's wife.)
- p. 198 . . . like Jehovah and Eve before they were split into two by sin.
(Adam and Eve, surely.)

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

B.L., p. 260 See even Bible, first chapter, verses 26 and 27.
(*Genesis*, first chapter.)

From *The Theosophist*, 1924.

April They that be whole need not the physician but they that be sick.
(Matthew ix. 12: "*They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*")

Th., p. 248 Your scientists . . . generally howled out "Eureka" when they ought to remember that even the Alpha did not hold quite secure in their empty heads.
(Alpha and *Eureka?* Surely not.)

The Mahatmas and the Bible

B.L., p. 7 Spirit is strong but flesh is weak.
(Matthew xxvi. 41: "*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*")

M.L., p. 28 "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther."
p. 38 "Hitherto shalt thou go and no further."
p. 336 "So far shall we go and no further."
(Job xxxviii. 11: "*Hitherto shalt thou come but no further.*")

p. 53 "God who hath made the eye shall he not see?"
(Psalm xciv. 9: "*He that formed the eye, shall he not see?*")

p. 142 "The ways of the Lord are inscrutable."
(Romans xi. 33: "*How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.*")

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- M.L., p. 74 Your "Lord God," says Bible, Chapter I
verse 24 and 26.
(*Genesis i. 25-26: "And God made—And,
God saw—And God said."*)
- p. 268 "They that be whole need not the
physician but they that be sick."
- p. 317 To be all to everyone and all things.
(*1 Cor. ix. 22: "I am made all things to all
men."*)

From *The Early Teachings of the Masters*.

- p. 273 Eureka! We have gotten a revelation of
the Lord.
- p. 268 . . . to feed pigs with pearls.

From *Luxor Letters III* (1875).

Brother Henry must have the wisdom of
the Serpent and the gentleness of a
lamb.—SERAPIS.

(*Matt. x. 16: "Be ye therefore wise as
serpents and harmless as doves."*)

Mockery and Parody

We are bound to say that very few of the quotations given above are employed in the sense in which they were written. Madame Blavatsky indicates her scorn for the writers and readers of the works she misquotes by calling them "your own bungled up Scriptures" (p. 74). And as if this alleged fault did not suffice, she distorts them the more (as our parallels show) with ignorant or calculated carelessness. "Your 'Lord God' says Bible, Chapter I, verse 25 and 26" and "The Lord God of Israel, who loved his son so well" are

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

instances of this. In the first, she makes an omniscient Mahatma, posing as a Higher Critic, prove he is not one, when he puts a "Jehovist" term into a text in which it does not occur. In the second, with the same perverted enthusiasm and in the same phrase, she puts the incongruous term into a parody of the Fourth Gospel. It is also a curious fact that with all the religious literature of the world under her observation, this advocate of "Universal Brotherhood" and student of "comparative religion" selects none but the Christian scriptures in their English text as the target for her wit. As a specimen of this sort of satire let us quote Mahatma Koot Hoomi's grotesque vision of the spirit who in the Apocalypse of John is seen upon the Great White Throne:

"... The kind merciful Father and Creator of all who lolls from the eternity, reclining with his backbone supported on a bed of incandescent meteors, and picks his teeth with a lightning fork" (p. 319).

Consummatum est

We give places of honour apart from the tainted associations of the above columns to the only quotations we have met with in the whole of the Blavatsky-Mahatma correspondence in which the words of the Christian scriptures are correctly rendered. Like Balaam the magician, whose will was to curse but whose destiny was to bless, the Mahatma rightly renders from the English Bible St.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Paul's verse: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16).

Our last example shows Madame Blavatsky and her Master, as if fatally led to the most revealing of agreements, quoting identically and correctly, in five places, two solemn words from the Latin Vulgate:

Blavatsky (*B.L.*, pp. 22, 64, 100, 102)
Consummatum est.

The Mahatma (*M.L.*, p. 292)
Consummatum est.

"Thy Speech Bewrayeth Thee"

If any words were needed by way of comment on the literal analysis and demonstration just made, or as a retort to the ignorance, perversion and bad taste exhibited in the writings, none could be found more apt than those addressed by the Syrian maid to the Apostle Peter while he warmed his hands by the fire in the governor's courtyard: *Thy speech bewrayeth thee*. In the Gospel drama the denier's tongue belied the truth of his own words; here, in the Theosophical evangel, the deceiver's pen unwittingly discovers her deceit. Writings said to have come from wise men in the East, and professing to reveal occult philosophy, disclose without intention the nativity, the acquired languages and the literary culture of their unacknowledged author. While pretending to lay open the secrets of the

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

macrocosm, they are everywhere interleaved with the biography of Madame Blavatsky, penetrated with her desires and aversions, her tastes, habits and ideas, and reminiscent of her abodes, travels and personal associations. Whatever may have been H.P.B.'s skill in her professed fictional and philosophical writings, her inventive talent deserted her in composing the Mahatma Letters, from which, despite all her endeavours, she was not able to exclude herself.

The Masculine Disguise

Helena Blavatsky's equestrian practice, acquired in youth and pursued in her early Asiatic travels, accustomed her to the assumption of a male habit in dress, and it was no less evident, from the vigour of her literary style, that she as readily played the male role with her pen, whenever the necessities of anonymity or pure deception required it. The persistent maintenance in being of her imaginative masculine creations, in long correspondence with credulous men associates, was no small achievement; of this there is proof in the many characteristic passages we have quoted from the letters of the supposed Mahatmas. In addition to the positive pose of the masculine disguise, the negative device of anti-feminism was frequently employed, and of this we give the following examples.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The Mahatmas' Anti-Feminism

- M.L., p. 36 *Women do lack the power of concentration.*
- p. 50 *Art Magic* and *Isis* emanating from women . . . could never hope for a serious hearing.
- p. 251 (M. to Sinnett in reference to K.H.) He knows nothing of the creatures—you do.
- p. 302 Generally I never trust a woman any more than I would trust an echo.
- p. 421 Verily woman—is a dreadful calamity in this fifth race!
- p. 428 K.H., after referring to visits to “all the sybils and sirens of the Theosophical establishment”, adds: “My own preferences make me keep to the safer side of the two sexes in my occult dealings with them.”
- p. 479 K.H. (quoted by H.P.B.) “Well, if you have not learned much of the Sacred Sciences and practical Occultism—and *who could expect a woman to*”—etc.

Readers of Madame Blavatsky's private correspondence will not need to be told that in writing the above passages she was not in any exceptional manner depreciating her own sex. She was habitually as unsparing in her invectives against intellectual and moral frailty in women as against enmity and materialism in men; it could have cost her no pains, therefore, to write the passages quoted.

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

The masculine disguise received more support when the Mahatmas' criticisms were directed against H.P.B. herself, as in the following additional passages. For these self-revelations, which would be almost too damaging if made as her personal confessions, have some value as apologies by others for her known shortcomings, and are obviously of no small service to the main Mahatmic design, as suggesting penetrating insight into human character and impartiality of mind.

The Mahatmas Anti-Blavatsky

- M.L., p. 105 Another fine example of the habitual disorder in which Mrs. H.P.B.'s mental furniture is kept. . . . As in her writing-rooms confusion is ten times confounded, so in her mind are crowded ideas piled in such a chaos that when she wants to express them the tail peeps out before the head.
- p. 129 She is a fanatic in her way, and is unable to write with anything like system and calmness.
- p. 182 The difficulty created by her ambiguous style and ignorance of English.
- p. 239 H.P.B. with her ridiculously impaired memory.
- p. 272 The Old Woman is accused of *untruthfulness, inaccuracy* in her statements. "Ask no questions and you will receive no lies." *She is forbidden* to say what she knows. . . . Nay—she is ordered *in cases of need to mislead people* (M.).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- M.L.*, p. 310 All that now happens is brought on by H.P.S. herself; and to you, my good friend and brother, I will reveal her shortcomings.
- p. 312 Yes; in that, and in that alone, she became constantly guilty of *deceiving* her friends. . . . Her impulsive nature . . . is always ready to carry her beyond the boundaries of truth, into the regions of exaggeration.
- p. 318 It is impossible, and dangerous, to entrust with such a subject, which requires the most delicate handling—either one or the other of our Editors (H.P.B. and H.S.O.).

Anti-Anna Kingsford

We have already mentioned the antipathy shown by one of the Mahatmas against Dr. Anna Kingsford, the Hermetic seeress, ostensibly proceeding from doctrinal differences, but too plainly springing, as we now show, from the personal animus of Madame Blavatsky. The Parallels from the Letters, given below, are eloquent upon the point; the almost literal correspondence between sentences in *M.L.*, p. 428, and *B.L.*, p. 64, will not escape notice.

(The Mahatma)

- M.L.*, p. 46 Another WOMAN—all over again.
- p. 329 The highly estimable authoress . . . is not exempt from a considerable dose of vanity and despotism.

The Blavatsky Hypothesis

- M.L., p. 403 Fascinating Mrs. Kingsford—She is very young, and her personal vanity and other womanly shortcomings are to be laid at the door of Mr. Maitland and the Greek chorus of her admirers.
- p. 428 It is too bad, really, that this “ladie fair” should have been put to the fruitless ramble through space to find insignificant me. . . . She is too haughty and imperious, too self-complacent for me; besides which she is too young and “fascinating” for a poor mortal like myself.

(*H. P. Blavatsky*)

- B.L., pp. 44, 65, 71 The “Divine Anna”.
- p. 51 ridicule of A.K.’s dress at Mr. Sinnett’s Conversazione.
- p. 66 the zebra-clad Kingsford.
- p. 64 a haughty, imperious, vain and self-opinionated creature, a bag of western conceit.
- p. 65 An unbearable female snob.
- p. 66 But the Anna was a snake, a horned aspic amongst roses.
- p. 159 It is evident there’s some new treachery emanating from the fair Anna.
- p. 212 The hypocritical she-devil.
- p. 240 Now the Kingsford is mixed up in it.

This collection of phrases will suffice, we think, to strip from the imposture we are handling its masculine disguise. In order to throw dust in the eyes of the very manly Mr. Sinnett and possible

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

later readers of the Letters, H.P.B. had to import into them a spirit of anti-feminism generally, and to aim it specifically against herself. What bravery! But did not Madame Blavatsky weaken this artifice when she employed her Mahatma to aid her attack on a rival woman?

SECTION XVI

THE FORBIDDEN LAND

Was Madame Blavatsky Ever in Tibet?

THEOSOPHICAL tradition says that Madame Blavatsky passed seven years of her wandering life in a Himâlayan retreat, studying Occult Philosophy with the Mahatmas. Belief in this story supplies much that is lacking in credibility in many other episodes of H.P.B.'s career; therefore it will surprise some readers to learn how slight is the foundation for the tradition, even in the testimony of its most important witness. Apart from a reference by Madame Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* to her Tibetan experiences, all the records we have are second-hand; they exist in two small books compiled at different dates by Mr. Sinnett and Mrs. Besant, entitled respectively *Incidents in the Life of H. P. Blavatsky* and *H.P.B. and the Masters of the Wisdom*. The matter for inclusion in these books could only have been provided by the subject of them, whose doubts and fears as to her life story being thus laid open are tragically expressed in many places in *The Blavatsky Letters*. But because both books were virtually called for as replies to public criticism, she had no option but to allow them to appear. The most remarkable fact about the two books is that on the subject of H.P.B.'s visits to Tibet *they do not tell the same story.*

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Mr. Sinnett's Version

The British public was first definitely informed of Madame Blavatsky's connection with Tibet in 1881, when Mr. Sinnett mentioned the "seven years" story in *The Occult World*. Even then it encountered a good deal of disbelief, which Mr. Sinnett boldly faced in the Appendices to his later editions. In the fourth edition he wrote: "She is either speaking falsely when she tells us that she so lived among them, or the Adepts who taught her are living men" (p. 178). In spite of the objectionable nature of the dilemma in which sceptical readers were placed by this passage, they persisted in asking rather probing questions about the Tibetan sojourn. "What particular years were thus occupied?" they seemed to ask, and the biographical booklets represent two attempts to give an answer.

The First Entry: 1856

Incidents says that H.P.B. was at Bombay in 1852, and thence tried and failed to enter Tibet from the South by way of Nepal. She was in Kashmir in 1856, whence she entered Tibet from the West with travelling companions, as recounted in *Isis*. She had not been long within the country, however, when she was obliged to return, being officially convoyed back to the frontier, whence she journeyed southwards, and left India in 1858. It will be seen that two years at the most were passed in this adventure, and not much of the time could have

The Forbidden Land

been spent in studious retreat within the confines of Tibet, for the pre-occupations of travel were very pressing, and there is no evidence that the party ever broke up or left the leadership of their Tartar guide.

The years 1867 to 1870, says Mr. Sinnett, "were passed in the East", though in what part of that vast region he does not say. Even if passed in Tibet, they could only account for three out of the seven traditional years. H.P.B. was at home in Russia in 1872, and went to America in 1873.

Mrs. Besant's Version

Mrs. Besant's *H.P.B.* gives more details of the Tibetan journeys, but makes no attempt to produce a harmony with Mr. Sinnett's *Incidents*. In 1848, immediately after her marriage, H.P.B. "made her first attempt to enter Tibet, but failed".* Her "second ineffectual attempt" was in 1853, and her "third unsuccessful attempt" in 1855. She "penetrated to Tibet about 1864"—eight years later, it should be noted, than the *Isis-Incidents* entry. About 1867 she was in Northern India; thence she went "to the Kumlun Mountains and Lake Palti" in Tibet. The first letter from K.H., "probably from Tibet", was received at Odessa November 11, 1870. The wanderer was doubtless on her way

* At this date H.P.B. would have been seventeen years of age, and according to the *Memoirs* of Count Witte, her cousin, the gates of Asia were closed to her no farther East than Tiflis, whence she passed into Europe.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

home at the time, as the letter intimated, for she arrived, as said by Mr. Sinnett, in 1872.

Mrs. Besant's *H.P.B.* was a later publication than *The Occult World* and *Incidents*, and may be regarded as in some respects a correction of them. Its failure to confirm the "seven years" story of the first book is therefore very significant. As to the second, *H.P.B.* omits the 1852 attempt from Nepal and the *Isis-Incidents* entry from Kashmir of 1856. Nevertheless it gives three attempts (1848, 1853, 1855) and one entry (1864) that Mr. Sinnett omits, and supplies a few Tibetan locations for the years 1867-70 "passed in the East".

Supplementary Particulars

A book recently published, entitled *Madame Blavatsky*, by Mr. Baseden Butt, gives a few additional particulars of H.P.B.'s connections with Tibet. It appears that Colonel Olcott, when travelling in India, chanced to encounter Major-General Murray, who in 1854 had been a Captain and a military commandant on the Nepal frontier. He told Colonel Olcott that he had in 1854 prevented Madame Blavatsky passing over into Tibet, and had kept her in his house in his wife's company for a month. The reader will notice that neither *Incidents* nor *H.P.B.* gives an attempt by way of Nepal in 1854. The first gives 1852, and the second, without naming the places, gives 1848, 1853 and 1855.

The 1856 entry is confirmed by Mr. Butt, who

The Forbidden Land

says the travellers penetrated a considerable distance into the inaccessible country, but he does not say what route was taken. Madame Blavatsky's guide was a Tartar Shaman, by whom, as described in *Isis* (Vol. II, Chapter XII), several occult marvels were performed.

Do the Letters Confirm the Story?

It is needless to say that the Tibetan tradition receives by suggestion no little support in the Mahatma Letters, though when the particulars of it are examined, they are found to be but feeble variants of the legend. H.P.B. was described by the Mahatma in 1880 as "our visible agent . . . and her phenomena have for about half a century*" astounded and baffled some of the cleverest minds of the age" (p. 10). It was implied in calling her "an initiated chela" that she had been on probation in Tibet; indeed, her occult training in that country had been so intense as to detach from her personality one of her "seven principles" and keep it behind in Tibet. "No man or woman . . . can leave the precincts of *Bod-Las* (Tibet) and return back into the world in his integral whole. . . . One, at least of his seven satellites has to remain behind. . . . She is no exception to the rule" (p. 203).

The above information was "a glimpse behind the veil" given to Messrs. Sinnett and Hume to

* Born July 31, 1831, H.P.B. had not at this date passed her fiftieth year.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

explain and excuse an exceptionally violent outburst of ill-temper on the part of Madame Blavatsky. She was said to be virtually "a psychological cripple", and not altogether responsible for her actions. It also conveyed the subtle suggestion that Tibet (where her "one principle" dwelt and pined) was her spiritual home, to which she would some day return. This was made plain in another Letter, where the Mahatma says: "When the hour comes she will be taken back to Tibet" (p. 256).

An ingenious suggestion was once made to convince Mr. Sinnett that H.P.B. was acquainted with the topography of Tibet: "You are curious to know where I am travelling about," writes the Mahatma. "I now come from *Sakya-Jung*. To you the name will remain meaningless. Repeat it before the 'Old Lady' and—observe the result" (p. 284). We can imagine the interesting colloquy that would follow the casual mention of "*Sakya-Jung*" by Mr. Sinnett, and can observe the result of it in his mind at least. He would think that if H.P.B. had secret knowledge of one place in Tibet that was not on the map, she must know of many others. We dare not speculate on what *she* thought of *him*, when "*Sakya-Jung*" came like a homing pigeon to her ears.

We learn from *The Blavatsky Letters* that in 1882 H.P.B. made a brief recuperative flight *via* Darjeeling to the home of the Mahatmas, and stayed some weeks at "the old place", said to be "twenty-three miles beyond the Sikkim border". A reference to this visit is made in *The Mahatma Letters*. Says

The Forbidden Land

K.H.: "She is better and we have left her near Darjeeling. She is not safe in Sikkim . . . and unless we devote the whole of our time to watching her, the 'Old Lady' will come to grief since she is now unable to take care of herself" (p. 446).

Madame Blavatsky never went back to "Bod Las" to recover her prodigal seventh "principle". When the time came for her to leave the East, she took her integral self to Europe, settled there, finished her work, and died among real people and good friends in a better home.

"Go Not Forth"

Readers of the Gospels will remember that the disciples of Christ were warned that after his departure certain "false Christs" would probably appear in one place or another, and they were advised not to go and hear them. Discouragement no less emphatic was put in the way of the disciples of the Mahatmas whenever the more ardent among them showed an inclination to seek conference with their Masters face to face in Tibet. When Mr. Sinnett was denied the visible presence of Koot Hoomi in India, and conceived the idea of meeting him on the frontier of Tibet, the Mahatma replied: "Your 'wild scheme' with Darjeeling, good friend, as its subjective point, is *not* wild, but simply impracticable. The time is not yet come . . . for your sake I would *if* I could, precipitate that interview" (p. 201).

When Mr. Hume, probably hoping and believing

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

less than Mr. Sinnett, made through him a proposal to visit Tibet, the Mahatma's reply was not only emphatically negative, but contemptuous. "You better try to make your friend and colleague Mr. Hume give up his insane idea of going to Tibet. Does he really think that *unless we allow it*, he, or *an army of Pelings* will be enabled to hunt us out, or bring back news, that we are, after all, but a 'moonshine' as she calls it. . . . His carrying out the plan will be the signal for an absolute separation between your world and ours. His idea of applying to the Govt. for permission to go to Tibet is ridiculous" (*M.L.*, p. 438).

A Fatal Letter

If we had not proved beyond question that the Mahatma Letters were written by Madame Blavatsky, the document from which we have just quoted would decide the point as regards itself, if not as regards the rest. It is Letter C in the *Mahatma* collection, and it appears also on page 4 of *The Blavatsky Letters*. The reason for the duplication is that it is written over the face of one of H.P.B.'s, with which it has no relation. The motive for this device could not have been economy (as was the case with Pope, who wrote quantities of his *Iliad* on the backs of old private letters), it must have been an endeavour to rivet in Mr. Sinnett's mind the belief in "precipitation"—"when we write inside your closed letters and uncut pages of books and pamphlets in transit" (p. 267). This conviction,



H. P. Blavatsky

H. S. Olcott

MADAME H. P. BLAVATSKY AND COLONEL H. S. OLcott

The Forbidden Land

as we have seen, was actually admitted by Mr. Sinnett.

The particular evidences that Mahatma Letter C is a Blavatsky composition are the following nine characteristics, all of which have been shown to occur in her acknowledged writings: (1) The Letter is only nineteen lines long, but *eleven* words in it are underlined. (2) Commas are omitted in three places, and redundant in two. (3) There is one dropped auxiliary verb—"you better try". (4) There are three wrong tenses—"will be" for would be (twice) and "forbid" for forbade. (5) "but a moonshine" for "all moonshine". (6) "Govt:" for Government (twice). (7) a threat of "absolute separation". (8) a Franco-English inversion—"set against themselves the Chohans as he has". (9) "L'hassa" (as in *Isis*) for Lhasa.

Truth Will Out

If the above nine points do not show the writer's hand, here is one that does. The Mahatma is supposed to be writing from Tibet, yet he is made to say "going to Tibet" and "go to Tibet", where he ought to say "coming" and "come" to Tibet. A similar slip occurs in Letter xxxv, in which a sentence reads: "Remember the proposed test of the *Times* to be brought here" (p. 247). We had not heard of the proposal before, though we remember another, mentioned in Letter 1, the object of which was to bring a copy of the *Pioneer* to London. In any case "here" must mean *Adyar, in India*,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

for what would be the use of a "phenomenal" production of *The Times* in Tibet? The conclusion is obvious. Madame Blavatsky is writing both Letters in her room at Headquarters, and inadvertently forgets the Mahatma's imagined location; hence she writes "going" for coming, and "here" for there.

The secret dwelling-places of the Mahatmas having become a theme for jests on the part of "the Sadducees", Madame Blavatsky was once possessed of a courageous impulse to lift the veil and show them, for the Mahatma writes: "To save us from being *insulted*, as she calls it, she is ready to give our real addresses and thus lead to a catastrophe" (p. 428). As no one seems to have accepted this offer, the addresses were not divulged, the catastrophe was averted, and the Sadducees continued to scoff.

Damodar's Goings and Comings

A few desperate fanatics are reported to have disregarded all warnings and scaled the Himâyan heights in search of the Mahatmas; two of them lost their reason and one (Damodar K. Mavalankar) was sent back within twenty-four hours of his departure, without a word of explanation. Of this case two telegrams give the particulars (p. 456). The first is from Colonel Olcott to H.P.B., dated November 25, 1883: "Damodar left before dawn at about eight o'clock letters from him and Koothumi found on my table—Don't say whether return or not."

The Forbidden Land

The second is from the same to the same, on the same date, and to the same effect: "The Masters have taken Damodar return not promised." To this the Master adds a note in his own hand: "We will send him back. K.H."

We cannot tell what really happened to Damodar. From both ends of the line we have references to his "going", but we lack the assurance of his reaching any goal. In a Letter referring to a Headquarters crisis, dated Summer, 1884, K.H. says: "Damodar went to Tibet" (p. 363) and H.P.B., in a Letter dated March 17th (probably 1885) touching on the same circumstances, exclaims: "Happy Damodar! He went to the land of Bliss, to Tibet and must now be far away in the regions of our Masters. No one will ever see him now, I expect" (*M.L.*, p. 468).

We can believe the last sentence above, but not the last but one. The Mahatma had an opportunity of confirming it at the time of his own writing by saying that *Damodar was with him in Tibet*, but he did not say so. Nor did he even say "he came to Tibet"—which would have placed the writer within the land of Bliss—he said "Damodar went to Tibet", which again only echoes the thought of Adyar, and traces the Letter to H.P.B.

Ecce in deserto est, nolite exire: ecce in penetralibus, nolite credere. This is a warning capable of two applications. The Christ was not to be sought in any place, for he might be found in every place. On the other hand, although the Mahatmas had

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

"real addresses", they were never to be found, for it was an "insane idea" to seek them.

Damodar in Substance and Shadow

The mysterious disappearance of Damodar would seem to be the natural sequel to his much-tried life. Cut off by his father for his attachment to H.P.B. and the rule of the Masters, he received in consequence the nickname of "the Disinherited" (generally written in the MSS. "Desinherited", as if it were derived from French *Desherité*). He had not long entered on his clerical career at Adyar when his "shadow-name" became detached from his substance and was passed off as another man! For H.P.B. wrote to Mr. Sinnett: "Disinherited wants to write to you he says—if you permit him—through Damodar" (*B.L.*, p. 10). *Through* Damodar? "Disinherited" is Damodar! Why this pretence of duality?

Mr. Sinnett, deceived by the pretence, must have given the permission required, for Damodar's hand wrote to him Letter xxxvii, marked it *Private*, signed it The "Disinherited" and posted it in *Bombay*. Its opening sentence: "The Master has awaked and bids me write" leads the reader to suppose it was written in the very presence of the Master in *Tibet*, and explains why Damodar's shadow had been separated from his substance. The Letter, says the boy, is dictated by the Master (twenty lines of it are his own quoted words) and it is written in English "with His help". This we

The Forbidden Land

cannot believe, but as the writer seems to know as much or as little English as H.P.B., and reveals her style in about *forty places*, we conclude it was written with *her* help.

The postscript to this Letter is its deepest mystery. "Should you desire to write to Him though unable to answer Himself Master will receive your letters with pleasure; you can do so through D. K. Mavalankar. 'Dd'" (p. 250). Again we have the pretence of duality. Damodar K. Mavalankar in India will forward letters to "Desinherited" in Tibet, who will put them before his Master for perusal.

Worse confusion is to come. "Desinherited" the shadow, having broken off from Damodar the substance, and become an independent substance, gets a shadow of his own, for he writes Letter cxxv (p. 453) and signs it "Gjual-Khool", the name of K.H.'s chela. The comedy of errors is crowned by the Mahatma, who inadvertently remarks that Letter xxxvii was written "by Damodar thro' the D—" (p. 260). We were told ten pages back that it was written by the D— through Damodar.

We are not surprised at Damodar's running away from Adyar, though we cannot be sure that he went to Tibet. We can understand the motive of Headquarters in turning a nickname into an entity and so increasing the staff of phantom chelas, but we think the Maratha boy with whose personality these tricks were played must have grown tired of them, and escaped to some place where he could get an assurance, most important in philosophy, as to who, what and where he was.

SECTION XVII

THE MANUSCRIPTS EXAMINED

By the combined permission of the executrix of the late Mr. A. P. Sinnett and Mr. A. Trevor Barker, the compiler, it has been possible for us to examine the Letters of the Mahatmas, as well as those in the same collection from Madame Blavatsky and other persons. The examination took place in London, in the presence of Mr. Barker. The time was short and we did our best to note the obvious facts. Close study was impossible. Mistakes hereafter, if any should occur, may be pardoned, as it has not been convenient to check the proofs with the original manuscript.

We are in a position to affirm at once that, considered as documents, there is not the least sign of mystery about any of these epistles. The calligraphy, whether European or Indian, is that of the period in which they were written; the instruments used are steel pens, black ink, red ink, red pencil, and blue pencil; a few Letters are written in brown or yellow ink. The paper used is, in the earlier stages, "large post quarto" glossy rice paper, common in colonial and Indian correspondence; but in time it descends into a variety of scraps of cheap "billet-doux" stationery in pink, yellow and blue tints. Envelopes of various sizes and shapes are preserved, stamped as from England, India or France, with postmarks and occasional registration marks. Seals,

The Manuscripts Examined

monograms and mottoes of various persons other than the alleged writers occasionally appear. It can be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that the writings suggest no system of "precipitation" or special method of production, and that they differ in no respect from any bundle of letters that might have been collected, on any other subject or by other writers, fifty years ago, before the invention of the typewriter. No microscope or chemical analysis is needed to examine the writing, nor could anything peculiar be discovered by such means. In all probability an Indian or English stationer, of age and experience extending backwards to the "eighties", could say at once where the paper was manufactured or sold, and a handwriting expert could with ease pronounce upon the period, class and culture of the persons writing the Letters. The legend of mystery and miracle may with confidence be dismissed—and with it the metaphysical essays on this topic by the Masters, Mr. Sinnett, Madame, Mrs. Besant, and Mr. Jinarājadāsa.

The Writers of the Letters

Putting together the two series—the "Mahatma" and "Blavatsky" Letters—they fall into the following classification :

1. Letters by Mahatama Koot Hoomi.
2. Letters by Mahatma Morya.
3. Letters by A. P. Sinnett.
4. Letters by A. O. Hume.
5. Letters by Countess Wachtmeister.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

6. Letters by W. Q. Judge.
7. Letters by H. S. Olcott.
8. Letters by Stainton Moses.
9. Letters by T. Subba Row.
10. Letters by Damodar K. Mavalankar.
11. Letters by D. N. Bowaji.
12. Letters by H. C. Mohini.
13. Letters by W. Gebhard.
14. Letters by Elliott Coues.
15. Letters by Anna Kingsford.
16. Letters by W. Eglinton, in two scripts.
17. Letters by Gjual Khool.
18. Letters by Maude (Travers) (not printed in the books).
19. Letters by an unidentified amanuensis for K.H.
20. Letters by Madame Blavatsky.
21. Telegrams by P.O. Officials.

The Hands of the Masters

1. The script of "K.H." is characteristic and easily identified, though it varies in adherence to or declension from its original type. It is the flowing well-formed cultured hand of a European, or, alternatively, and with less probability, of an oriental educated on the Western model; anterior in style, we venture to say, to the introduction of "copy books" into the Indian schools. The earlier Letters are very carefully penned, so carefully, indeed, that there is a suggestion of their having been feigned; but this degree of painstaking is not sustained for long, and the writer in time falls into a quicker

The Manuscripts Examined

and freer style. K.H. writes with a fine pen, and as a rule in black ink. As said above, he writes on thin rice paper. Many of the Letters are in blue pencil, and have evidently been written on a ribbed cloth book-cover or desk, which reveals itself through the script, as is usual in the case of pencil writing. Other letters are written in red pencil without the ribbed under-surface.

Apart from the openings to the earlier Letters and the signatures to them, the K.H. Letters appear to be normal and naturally written. The signatures—"Koot' Hoomi Lal Singh" (generally "Sing")—are decidedly suggestive of a firm and formal hand. In the body of his letters the writer almost invariably uses a stroke over the letter M, which is characteristic of mediaeval Latin and English script, and is derived from the classical mode of abbreviation. The stroke formerly signified either the letter M itself or a repetition of it; therefore its use over M or double M is unnecessary and meaningless. In the course of his European travels and wide reading, the Mahatma must surely have seen the stroke in place of M on any Roman monument, or in the Psalter (*DOMINV*), the Domesday Book (*REGE*), the Bayeux Tapestry (*PALATIVV* *svV*), or the Reading Abbey Round—"Sumer is icumen in" (*ROTA*, *CRUCE*). His practice would appear, therefore, to have been an ignorant affectation—unless any other explanation, coming from India or Russia, can be offered.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The Hand of Morya

2. The Letters written by "M." appear to us to be deliberate degenerations from a natural and better hand. The letters are very often separated, as if studiously and slowly produced. There are European forms in the script, and the letter "r" is certainly Continental, indeed, Russian in style, like several other letters. In the specimen of M.'s handwriting given by Mr. Barker in the *M.L.*, the tell-tale "r" appears fifteen times. The red ink used is poor "home-made" glossy stuff, similar to that used by ticket writers in a bookshop. Often the angle of writing is oblique, and the flourished signature "M." is almost like "M.C." in appearance. We have no hesitation in saying that the Letters of M. have a close affinity to the finer normal writing of Madame Blavatsky. It is as if a fairly good writer were deliberately writing badly and in a feigned style, in order to deceive. By a kind of caligraphic atavism, Russian-style letters appear in every line. For what it is worth, we may give the warning of K.H. with reference to his brother's hand: "You must not feel altogether sure that because they are in *his* handwriting they are written by him" (*M.L.*, p. 232).

The Styles of the Scriptorium

Writers of

Nos. 9, 11 and 12. The few letters of Subba Row,

The Manuscripts Examined

Bowrji and Mohini are in the flowing style of educated Indians.

10. The writing of Damodar is the clear, almost childish and "copy-book" style of a youth who has gone through the Western education given in India.
16. The writing of Eglinton in Letter cxciii (*B.L.*) is almost feminine, and undisciplined by the copy-book, while that of Letter cxciv (*B.L.*) attributed by Mr. Barker to Eglinton, confessing to some delinquency, is signed E. only, and is in a totally different hand.
17. Two Letters (*M.L.* xxxvii and cxxv) in *identical hand* are signed respectively The "Desinherited" and "Gjual-Khool". We learn from Mr. Jinarājadāsa* that the former title was a nickname for Damodar K. Mavalankar; the second is the name of K.H.'s chela, who is supposed to live with him in Tibet. But why does he write in Damodar's hand? The letters are in a clear, childish and upright hand, slowly written in coloured ink. The second is signed "By order"; both might be the work of a just-educated Indian youth, fresh from school.
18. Miss Maude Travers writes in pencil one Letter by order of K.H.
19. The single Letter (No. lxxxvii) by the unknown amanuensis has two postscripts by K.H. It is very clearly and boldly written in copy-book style with a broad pen in green ink, quite

* *Early Teachings of the Masters*, p. 75.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

European in character, but quite probably by an Indian with English education.

20. The numerous Letters of Madame Blavatsky are written in a minute and normally clear hand with a sustained "continental" style, but they are much affected by ill-health and emotion, so that some are almost illegible. There is a single Letter in the collection, but not printed in either of the books, from Madame Zelihovsky, H.P.B.'s younger sister—of which more anon.

It is now possible to say, from an examination of the Letters, that those which purport to come from the Masters or to be written for them are in *ten different hands*, viz. K.H., M., Subba Row, Damodar, Bowaji, Mohini, Gjual Khool, Maude Travers, the unknown amanuensis, and H.P.B. Evidently a fairly large "scriptorium" existed in conducting the Mahatmic mission.

The Letters in Detail

The following is a detailed examination of all the physically significant Letters in the two collections. We begin with *The Mahatma Letters*, adhering to Mr. Barker's Roman numeration.

1. On rice paper, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, in black ink, carefully written with a fine pen, with signature "Koot' Hoomi Lal Singh" and a counter-signature in unrecognizable script (see p. 241, Signatures and Counter-signatures).

The Manuscripts Examined

- ii. Ditto, but with the word "Singh" changed to "Sing". The word "L'Hassa" appears, reminiscent of the form of this word used by Madame Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled*.
- iii.a. Ditto, but paper folded to $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$.
- iv. Ditto, reverting to $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ and to signature "Koot' Hoomi Lal Singh", with four words of the name in poorly written Devanāgarī script (see pp. 241-3).
- v. Ditto, but with "Lal Singh" deleted (see *M.L.*, p. 364, for explanation).
- vi. Ditto, written in dark blue ink.
- viii. Ditto, written in dark blue ink, signed K.H. After the words "Simla at least" (p. 34) is a paragraph written in the hand of the "Disinherited".
- ix. In the MS. the word "Imper" appears throughout, but it has been printed as "Imperator".
- x. Written on 8vo half-sheets in black ink.
- xi. No MS. of this Letter exists in the collection. The printed edition (pp. 59-66) is copied from Sinnett's MS. book.
- xii. On large buff sheets $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ in red ink by M. with the postscript in red pencil. It bears four pseudo-Chinese characters which are pronounced by a linguistic authority to be meaningless.
- xiii. On thin paper $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in Sinnett's hand, with replies by M. in red ink.
- xiv. Copied from Sinnett's MS. book. The postscript refers to fly-leaves enclosed. They are not in the collection.
- xvi. Sinnett's 10 questions are cut out of his letter

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

and pasted on to thin blue paper $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, to which replies are in the K.H. hand. Ten folios are written with a thick pen and seven with a fine pen on rice paper.

- xvii. On Sinnett's paper with K.H.'s replies in red ink, dated June, 1882. Quotes *Isis*: says at end: "I do not know Subba Row—who is a pupil of M." Why, then, has K.H. interpolated comments and underlinings in a letter from S.R., 10th August, 1882, to Blavatsky? (*B.L.*, CLXII). Why also does S.R. report in the same letter that he is permitted by M. and K.H. to instruct Mr. Sinnett?
- xviii. On large buff paper $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ the same as M. uses in xii, written in dark blue ink by K.H.
- xix. On two small slips in blue pencil on a ribbed cloth book.
- xxa. Written by Hume on 8vo in black, which K.H. has underlined in blue pencil on ribbed book. Part of his reply to Hume is on the back of a letter from Sinnett to H.P.B.
- xxb. Sinnett's small slips to H.P.B. with K.H.'s replies in blue pencil. K.H. sends 10 extra sheets in blue pencil.
- xxiii. Sinnett's slips, first followed by 19 of K.H. on thin paper, and 18 on pink paper, 8vo.
- xxiv. On heavy note-paper 8vo, in black ink with fine pen, by K.H.
- xxv. On blue paper, 8vo, in black ink by K.H.
- xxvi. On rice paper, one sheet $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, in blue preceded by \ddagger ; initialled K.H.
- xxviii. On rice paper, 12 sheets in style of earlier letters, with signature "Koot' Hoomi Lal Sing", as in those.

The Manuscripts Examined

- xxix. On ten sheets rice paper, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, in red, initialled M.
- xxx. On thirteen sheets rice paper $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, in blue ink, by K.H. to Hume. On folios 2 and 3 appears an extract from Hume's letter *apparently in his own hand*. It is supposed to have been precipitated in Tibet from his letter. In reality it is carefully *traced* from Hume's original through the semi-transparent rice paper; the mystery or miracle dissolves into a trick intended to impress Hume.
- xxxi. Purporting to come "from the depths of an unknown valley, amid the steep crags and glaciers of Terich-Mir", this letter, written on rice-paper, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, was posted on March 25th, 1881, at Nantes, Loire Inférieure, France, as the envelope shows. *The address is in the K.H. hand* to Sinnett, c/o J. Herbert Stocks, Esq., 30 Kensington Park Gardens, London. Stamped London, March 26, 1881.
- xxxiii. On tissue, odd size, in blue pencil, by K.H. Sinnett has endorsed it "Shown to A.B." (Mrs. Annie Besant) as requested by its writer. "You may, if you see fit, show this note to her *only*."
- xxxiv. On blue paper, odd size, written by K.H. on ribbed cloth book in blue pencil.
- xxxv. On rice-paper $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, in blue ink in K.H.'s later, freer style. Here M.'s initial is copied.
- xxxvii. On glossy, buff odd-sized sheet, in blue ink, signed by the "Desinherited". Three times he writes in the style of M.'s initial in referring to that Mahatma as "M. Sahib."
- xlvii. On 3 sheets of rice-paper $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in red by M.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- L & LI. On odd blue scrap in blue chalk on ribbed cloth book.
- LIII. On thin blue $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in blue pencil, ribbed; the red portion referring to M.'s opinion. M. adds a piece in red in his own writing.
- LV. On 6 small 8vo slips in blue pencil. In the last line K.H. quotes the hopeful motto *Post nubila Phoebus* used by Baron Shuldham.
- LX. On cheap polished handmade paper; a scrap written in blue pencil by K.H.
- LXI. Written in red by M., using a cheap Indian printed envelope addressed "Sinnett Sahib".
- LXII. On 6 pp. note and 4 pp. rice in black by K.H. in watery black ink.
- LXVI. On rice paper in 4 pp. 4to in blue pencil by K.H. Supposed to have been written at Tzigadze in Tibet, but undated; it was received in London on October 10, 1884, at the moment when the Coulomb exposure was at its height. H.P.B. was in England at the time, and had on October 7, 1884, sent a letter to *The Times* (October 9, 1884) protesting her innocence in that affair. Letter LXVI was posted at Bromley, Kent (not a thousand miles from 77 Elgin Crescent, Notting Hill, N., where Madame was then staying), on October 9, 1884, and addressed to Sinnett at 7 Ladbroke Gardens, Notting Hill. The envelope has on the flap a monogram of a large compass with the initials S.W. (Sam Ward) in red, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter. The writer refers to the "present tempest". He adds "Do not, I pray you, attribute the above to any influence from H.P.B." A wise warning!

The Manuscripts Examined

- LXVII. Written to Col. Olcott on 4to rice paper; bad writing, ending: "This is 'a K.H. letter'." A "J" pen has been used here for the first time. The hand somewhat resembles that of Damodar.
- LXVIII. A letter signed "Maude" (Maude Travers, later Mrs. Scott Elliott) to "my dearest" (Mrs. Sinnett) encloses one for Sinnett written at the dictation of K.H. and initialled in blue pencil by him. It is dated August 20 (1884?). The enclosure is Letter LXVIII, undated.
- LXIX. On thin tissue paper like Letter XXXIII, by K.H. in blue pencil.
- LXXI. On a scrap in yellow ink by M., thanking Sinnett for the present of a pipe, which is to be "*cooloted*", that is, *coulotté*, or coloured by nicotine.
- LXXIII. On a scrap in red by M.
- LXXV. On the back of a piece of blue official foolscap in red by M. It is curious that on the reverse side there are some scribbles in H.P.B.'s handwriting. What does this signify?
- LXXVI. On polished cheap handmade scrap in blue, signed K.H., in which the H, as in many other cases, bears a great resemblance to the way H.P.B. writes her own initial H.
- LXXVIII. On 4 cheap 4to sheets of pink paper in black by K.H.
- LXXX. On 2 sheets of notepaper stamped "*The Pioneer, Allahabad*", of which Sinnett was editor, no date, in blue pencil by K.H.
- LXXXII. On 6 rice-paper 4to sheets by K.H.
- LXXXIII. On 2 rice-paper 4to sheets by K.H.
- LXXXIV. A scrap in green ink, for the first time, by K.H.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- LXXXVII. On 4 sheets of rice-paper, written in *green ink* in large, clear, copper-plate handwriting, not seen in any other letter. The envelope is similarly written. It was posted at *Adyar* on January 16, 1884, and delivered in London on February 7 or 17, 1884. Signed “(By order of my Most Venerated Guru Deva Mahatma K. Δ)” and followed by a counter-signature in *Devanāgarī* script, meaning “*Bhola Deva Sarmi*”.
- xcii. In red pencil by K.H.; on a thin piece of card containing Tibetan words which are ordered to be used as a test of the genuineness of spirit communications.
- xciii. On rice-paper 4to red and blue, on the heading is a monogram B.L.R. and the motto “Knowledge is power”, at present unidentified. With reference to passages in an earlier letter (No. vi) here repeated, K.H. says, “I transcribe them with my own hand this once, whereas the letter in your possession was written by a chela.” *Letter VI just mentioned by Mahatma, is in fact written in the same hand as this one!* (see Sections XIII and XIV on “The Kiddle Incident”).
- xcv. On *Pioneer* notepaper written by K.H., who also uses a piece stamped “Government of the N.W. Province of Oudh”, in which is situated Allahabad, where the *Pioneer* was published.
- xcvi. On notepaper 8vo in red ink. The paper has the same seal of the compass in red which appears on the envelope of Letter LXVI of K.H. posted at Bromley, Kent, on October 9, 1884. The date is not given, but it refers back

The Manuscripts Examined

- to one of 23.11.83 (xcii) and may have been written in 1884, when the party was in England; the seal is believed to be that of an individual named Sam Ward, of Piccadilly.
- xcvii. On polished handmade paper in red chalk by M.
- xcix. Hume's letter to Koot Hoomi contains some of the Mahatma's replies; it was returned in the same envelope with the name and address disguised by overwriting.
- cii. On a handmade chit in red by M.
- ciii. On rice-paper 4to in red by M., from which it appears that Damodar is "Benjamin", M.'s chela.
- civ. On yellow paper in blue ink by K.H.
- cvi. By K.H. Has a wounded heron crest and motto "*A deo et rege*", as used by Sinnett, on the envelope—a case of stationery *osmosis*.
- cviii. By M. Has a monogram of three roses on paper. Whose?
- cix. By M. in red.
- cx. By K.H. in blue pencil.
- cxi. By K.H. on blue in blue ribbed pencil.
- cxii. By K.H. on blue in blue ribbed pencil.
- cxiv. By M. in red on rice-paper 4to.
- cxvi. By K.H. in red on rag paper.
- cxvii. By K.H. in blue on a $\frac{1}{4}$ -anna card introducing Mohini to Sinnett.
- cxviii. By K.H. in blue on yellow scrap.
- cxix. By K.H. on *Pioneer* notepaper. Both notes were probably sent to H.P.B., giving a message to Sinnett. Rice paper appears to be running short.
By K.H. on T.S. note-heading, Adyar.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- cxx. A chit on Indian printed envelope by K.H.
- cxxi. A chit by K.H.
- cxxii. A chit on Indian envelope by K.H.
- cxxv. On rice-paper in yellow ink signed "Gjual-Khool", but in the handwriting used by The "Desinherited" of Letters viii and xxxvii.
- cxxvii. The MS. is a copy in Sinnett's hand of letters to himself and Hume by K.H.
- cxxxviii. By H.P.B. on blue foolscap, like that used by M. in Letter lxxv.
- cxlII. To Sinnett from Damodar. A facsimile of a portion of this Letter (No. cxliib) is printed in *The Mahatma Letters*.

A Few of the Blavatsky Letters

- III. A postcard to Sinnett in French and English, giving notice of communications from Morya, signed "Mulligan—H.P.B."
- v. K.H. signs "KOOT HOOMI LAL SINGH" in a long postscript to a letter from Blavatsky to Sinnett.
- CLXIV. From T. Subba Row, Triplicane, Madras, 16th August, 1882, addressed "To Mahatma Koothoomi Lal Singh, etc., etc., etc. Honoured Sir." Signed, "Your most humble and obedient servant." If this letter went to Tibet, what is the explanation of its inclusion in the Blavatsky collection?
- CXCIII. Signed "W. Eglinton" and written from Earl's Court to Sinnett in India on *Pioneer* paper, supposed to have been brought to London by a spirit called "Ernest". What did Sinnett think about it?

In *M.L.*, p. 118, Sinnett asks: "When

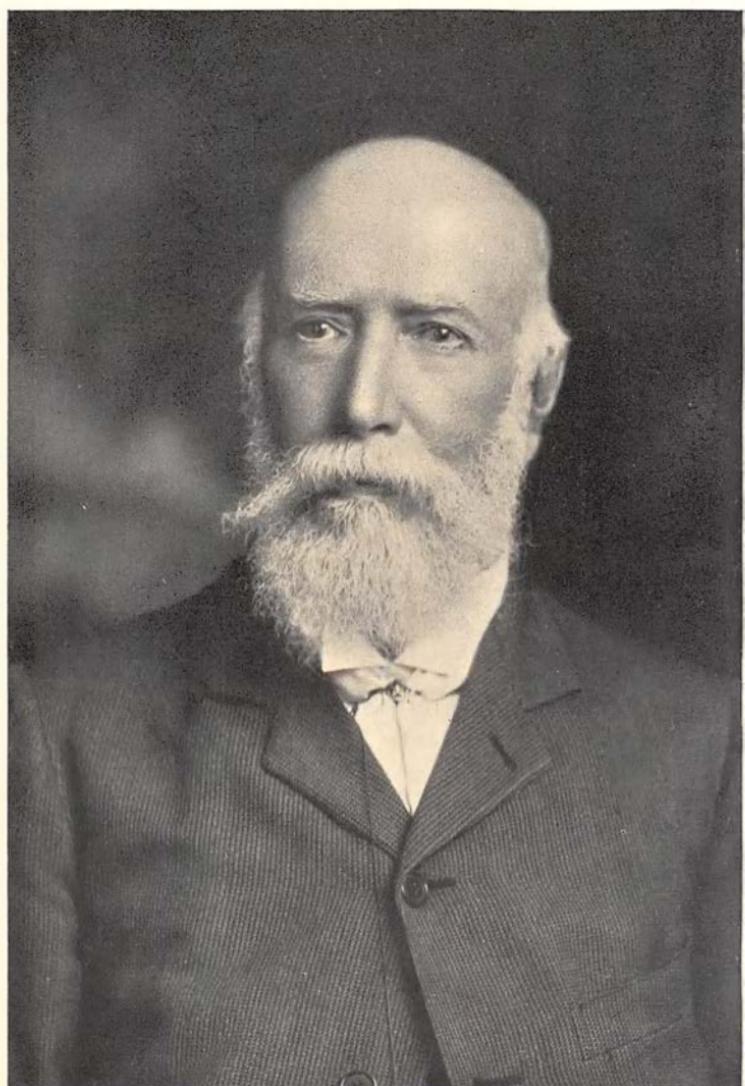


Photo by

MR. A. P. SINNETT

[Elliott & Fry]

The Manuscripts Examined

'Ernest' took that sheet of *Pioneer* notepaper, how did he contrive to get it without mediumship at this end?" K.H. answers: "The several 'privations' of such sheets of notepaper were evolved during E.'s stay in Calcutta in Mrs. G.'s atmosphere—since she frequently received letters from you. It was then an easy matter for the creatures in following E.'s unconscious desire to attract other disintegrated particles from your box, so as to form a double" (*M.L.*, p. 122).

Enclosed in the Letter is a chit in the hand of K.H., professing to have been produced in London by a medium while the writer was "at Tzi-gadze, Tibet". It was probably sent through the post to E. with the *Pioneer* paper, with instructions what to say.

- cxciv. Written to M., who is addressed as "My Father", by E. (Eglington?) October 3, 1882, in a flowing clear hand, but not in the style of an educated Englishman. If this letter went to Tibet, its inclusion in the Blavatsky collection is perhaps explained by the note at the top, "Pray preserve this. M."

Mr. Barker has kindly shown us another letter in the hand of the medium Eglington, written on paper with the S.W. red compass seal, emanating apparently from Lhadak, and signed "Morya". It was produced at a spiritualistic séance at Sam Ward's rooms. Mr. Sinnett has endorsed it "nonsense".

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Stationery Employed

From the foregoing detailed examination the following facts may be extracted as to the physical aspect of the Letters.

1. Rice-paper $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ is used by K.H., M., Gjuel Khool and the unknown amanuensis. It is also employed frequently by Sinnett and H. P. Blavatsky.
2. Rough handmade paper $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ is used by K.H. and M.
3. *Pioneer* notepaper is used by K.H. and Eglington, the medium.
4. Government of N.W. Provinces paper is used by K.H.
5. Pink paper is used by K.H.
6. Heavy 8vo notepaper is used by K.H.
7. Blue paper is used by K.H. and M.
8. Tissue paper is used by K.H.
9. Blue foolscap is used by M. and H. P. Blavatsky.
10. Yellow paper is used by K.H.
11. Theosophical Society notepaper is used by K.H.
12. Cheap Indian envelopes are used by K.H. and M.
13. The ribbed basis for paper is used many times by K.H. alone.
14. The monogram B.L.R. is printed on paper used by K.H. for Letter xciii "in his own hand", the wounded heron seal by K.H., the three roses by M., while paper bearing a seal of a marine compass is used by K.H., M. and a medium.

Signatures and Counter-Signatures

Letter 1, concluding "always your sincere friend", bears the signature "Koot Hoomi Lal Singh", written, apparently, with a broader pen than is

The Manuscripts Examined

used for the body of the letter, and in a firmer and *different* hand. The three last words are connected, and the whole name is almost completely enclosed in a loop, beginning below the final "h" and ending just above it.

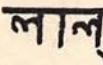
Letter IV appears to be in the same hand as Letter I, concluding "Yours faithfully, Koot Hoomi Lal Singh." The signature is in a hand *similar* to the letter, a fine pen has been used, and the form of the earlier signature followed, but with a weaker stroke. The sign for capital "H", taken by itself, could not be recognized, the three last words are not joined, and the loop is repeated.

K.H.'s signature to Letter I has under it a word which may be taken to be the counter-signature of the scribe. It is a puzzling mixture, apparently, of Roman and Greek letters and some oriental signs. Removing the trimmings, however, the substantial forms that emerge seem to be the capital letters "H.P.B.", concluding after a space with the smaller letters "cy" or "cz". The signature does not appear on any other document.

Letter IV, by K.H., has his signature "Koot Hoomi Lal Singh" repeated in Devanāgarī script; it is written, however, in an unusually sloping style, with a fine pen and by an apparently inexperienced hand; it is incorrect in several particulars.

- (1) The first and second names should not be joined.
- (2) The long vowel $\overline{\text{oo}}$ requires the sign ~ under the sign for K, thus कू , not कु , which is the sign for short $\check{\text{u}}$.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- (3) The consonant T, ending the first name KOOT,
 , requires the Virāma \ after or under it,
 to prevent it reading TA.
- (4) The letter H to HOOMI is represented by an unrecognizable sign; it should read .
- (5) The syllable HOO would be better rendered by the compound sign  than by the separate and badly written signs for H and OO.
- (6) The syllable MI should read  , not  ; the sign  for short vowel ī always precedes i writing the consonant it follows in speech.
- (7) The third and fourth names should not be joined.
- (8) The syllable LAL,  , requires the Virāma
 after it to prevent it reading LALA.
- (9) The signs for SI are very badly written, but are properly placed. They should read  ; the additional sign  above the line is not required; it is a form of the letter R, which is not in the name.
- (10) The final GH requires the sign  , with the Virāma after it, to prevent it reading GHA; the sign used bears no resemblance to Devanāgarī.

In support of the above critical examination, we give approximate renderings in Devanāgarī of the name "Koot' Hoomi Lal Singh," first, as it would

The Manuscripts Examined

appear if correctly written, and second, as it appears at the foot of Letter IV, slightly reduced.

કુટ્ટ હૃપિ લાલ સિંહ

કુટ્ટસી લાલ સિંહ

Letter LXXXVII of K.H., written by an unknown amanuensis, reveals his identity by a counter-signature in Devanāgarī script, written amateurishly under the name of the supposed dictator. It may be read: BHOLA DEVA SARMI, considered to be the chela name of BOWAJI.

General Remarks on Handwriting

It is needless at this stage of our inquiry to employ the services of a handwriting expert to examine the Mahatma and the Blavatsky Letters. The origin of the documents has already been traced, internally as to their contents, and externally as to their physical appearance and the apparatus employed. Nevertheless a few general remarks on handwriting may be made.

Art and Artifice

Ordinary observation, not to say expert knowledge, makes us familiar with the characteristic hand-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

writing of different nations. To-day, American, French, German, Colonial, and Indian writing can be detected at a glance by anyone accustomed to receive international correspondence. National characteristics were even more marked before the coming of the typewriter.

In the *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett* there is one from Madame Vera Zelihovsky, the sister of H.P.B. On inspecting the original document, we were immediately struck by the character of the handwriting; it was indisputably Russian. But even more striking than this was its affinity to the supposed letters of K.H. This fact can be accounted for by remembering that the two ladies were sisters, and presumably educated, in writing at least, in the same school or fashion. We may assume H.P. Blavatsky's normal, youthful hand to be like her sister's—a round, clear, and flowing penmanship, with special Russian forms of some of the letters.

Anyone may test himself by an experiment: let him abandon the scribble of his fifties or sixties, and write carefully and freely. He will revert in some degree to the style of his twenties or his youth, not consciously, or from memory, but unconsciously. The *hand* will remember its earlier accomplishments.*

On this theory the careful hand of K.H. is the early hand of the youthful H.P.B., revived in the

* The Authors can vouch for this; having been trained for the English Civil Service in youth, they found the Civil Service style of writing capable of being revived to the perfection of the copybook in the war period of special clerical service.

The Manuscripts Examined

'eighties. It has many Russian characteristics. The earliest letter in this hand is that written in French to the Blavatsky family, unsigned, in 1870, at which time Madame was in her thirty-ninth year.

The change coming with age, much writing, and contact with European and American usage, reduced the rotundity of her hand, which became smaller, sharper, narrower in letter formation—the well-known hand of the lady in middle-age. This new hand could be and was occasionally written carefully. The best examples are the two signatures "Koot' Hoomi Lal Singh" at the foot of Letters i and iv. In Letter i the text and the signature are distinct in style, as if an effort had been made to mark the difference, which was not kept up in Letter iv and later.

But Letter i certainly, and Letter iv by inference, at least purport to be written in two hands, the text by some amanuensis and the signature by another hand. The counter-signature to that of Letter i provides another perplexity. If it means anything at all, it suggests that the signature above it is *not* that of Koot Hoomi—as in commercial correspondence we subscribe "per pro . . ." Who was the principal and who the clerk?

It is enough to say that in the course of time the Script A (of K.H.) degenerates into a scribble, and the care shown in the earlier letters is not maintained; still, it is clearly the same hand.

So much for K.H.; we now turn to M. Here the hand is *deliberately* degenerate. It bears little resemblance—except in the case of some few letters—to

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

K.H.'s hand. It is a forced declension from the middle-aged, angular hand of H.P.B. herself. In A she goes back to her youth; in B (signature to Letter 1) she writes over-carefully her middle style; in C (the hand of M.) she throws away all care and lets herself go to such an extent that the script is often hardly readable.

It is not necessary here to go into the American period of the "Luxor Letters" in detail, except to remark that there, as Mr. Jinarājadāsa's recent book has shown, there was an earlier strained hand of very closely formed letters, devoid of curves—as if the Europeanized lady were cramping her normal hand into the least possible space. There is also what may be called a copper-plate script. These two we may call D and E.

Unhappily we have been formally forbidden to reproduce any parts of the Mahatma or Blavatsky letters that were submitted to us for examination; consequently our readers must take our word for many of the statements made in regard to them. Those who are curious to see acknowledged specimens of these writings will find them in the front pages of Mr. Barker's book, where initialled fragments of the "M." and "K.H." scripts appear. In the sixth and revised impression Koot Hoomi's full signature is revealed, with Tibetan, Sanskrit, and other cryptic accompaniments (p. xlvi).

By good fortune, however, there has come into our hands a photograph of a letter in the undoubted "K.H." hand, believed to have been addressed, about April 6, 1885, to Dr. Franz

The Manuscripts Examined

Hartmann, author of *Magic, White and Black*, who was at that time in partial control of the Theosophical Headquarters at Adyar. It will be seen that the letter expresses the wish of the Mahatma that the Board of Control would continue to employ, "in charge of the household business", a certain Madame Coulomb, whose suspected "conspiracy" and "treachery" against H.P.B., through the years of her Indian residence, had been the subject of extremely bitter passages in her letters. Anyone who has read this correspondence cannot but be astonished at the forgiving tone of the Mahatma's letter, which counsels Headquarters "to err on the side of mercy" in dealing with this sometime "irresponsible" domestic. Seeing that in this letter the Master completely ignores the injured feelings and severe judgments of his Chela, who never had a good word to say for "the Coulomb", and was at this very time repudiating her in the London press, the whole letter, and especially the extraordinary condescension of the last sentence—"Show this to Mad. C."—seems to us to breathe more of the spirit of policy than of charity.

As to the style of the writing of this letter, it is only necessary to say that it is a very good specimen of the developed "K.H. hand". It is exceptionally firm and clear, is correct in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and contains two very marked peculiarities of its reputed writer—the extended crossing of the letter "t" and the line over the letter "m".

Here follows a slightly reduced facsimile of the letter, which was written about April, 1885.

So long as one has not developed a perfect sense of justice, he should prefer to err rather on the side of injury than commit the slightest act of injustice. Lead. Coulomb is a medium & as such irresponsible for many things she may say or do. At the same time she is kind and charitable. One must know how to act towards her to make of her a very good friend. She has her own weaknesses but their bad effects can be minimised by exercising on her mind a moral influence by a friendly & kindly feeling.

Her mediatorial nature is a help in this direction, if proper advantage be taken of the same. It is my wish therefore that she shall continue in charge of the household business, the Board of Control of course exercising a proper supervisory control & seeing in consultation with her, that no unnecessary expenditure is incurred. A good deal of reform is necessary and can be made easier with the help than the antagonism of Mr. Coulomb. Daimadar would have told you this but his mind was purposely obscured, without his knowledge, to test your intuitiveness. Show this to lead. C. so that she may co-operate with you.

H. H.

The Manuscripts Examined

Light from Older Manuscripts

After completing our examination of the Mahatma and Blavatsky Letters addressed to Mr. Sinnett, we made a brief study of the collection entitled *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom* (second series) published in facsimile in 1925, which Mrs. Besant in a foreword describes as "this priceless booklet". None of these Letters were addressed to Mr. Sinnett, and not all of them came from the Mahatmas K.H. and M., but the style of their writing throws some light on the larger body with which we are most concerned, therefore we will make a few comments upon them.

The first Letter is dated by the recipient November 11, 1870, and purports to have come from some occult source telling Madame Blavatsky's relations in Odessa that she would soon return to them. *The Letter is written in French* and is not signed by the name of any writer.

Letter ii is signed "K.H." and dated 1876; it is in similar handwriting to No. i, though written in a freer style. Then follow the letters supposed to have been written by the Brothers of the Luxor Lodge in Egypt to Colonel Olcott in New York, in which the Blavatsky key-word "try" (as we have already shown) occurs several times. They are in a disguised copper-plate handwriting. Letter xvi is in a disguised Germanic hand, signed "Serapis", and Letter xxiv in a similar hand, though written with less care.

Letter xxviii, signed "M.", is almost exactly

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Madame Blavatsky's own, and is addressed to Colonel Olcott; the date is given as October 3rd, 1879. Letter XL is supposed to have come from the "Master Hilarion", and was received June 6, 1883. *It is written in French*, and is hardly distinguishable from the "M." script which we have already discerned as "debased Blavatsky hand". Letter LXXVI is in this last-mentioned hand, like those addressed to Mr. Sinnett.

If the dates of Letters II and XXVIII are genuine, we learn from them that these Masters were invented and named in America.

In concluding this examination of the Manuscripts, we may note a few particulars in which it has yielded results that confirm the findings reached by the reading of the printed text. To take first the "precipitation" process, for long believed to be the method of Mahatmic composition and transmission: our investigation of that subject in Section XII has shown that the testimony of the Letters, taken as a whole, gives very little support for the traditional Theosophical belief, and no intelligible idea of the physics or metaphysics of the process itself. The Manuscripts, as we have said, reveal nothing to the sense suggestive of exceptional clerical art, hence they correspond with the proved inferiority of their literary contents in respect of accuracy of fact and reference, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

The disclosures made by the examination of the stationery used—impossible to be derived from the printed text alone—are astonishing. Starting

The Manuscripts Examined

out impressively on what might conceivably be a Far Eastern lamasery's best rice-paper, the writers are later found in such straits for material that they descend to a variety of bazaar-bought scraps, and even to the appropriation, in a number of cases, of the official note of their correspondents.

Lastly, the carelessness shown by a Mahatma and a chela of his school in the use of the Devanāgarī script, though surprising enough considered in itself, is only what might have been expected after the proof given in Section x on Indian Philosophy as to the ignorance and lack of scruple displayed in pretended citations from Indian classics.

SECTION XVIII

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

THE evidence produced in support of our “Blavatsky Hypothesis” consists mainly of extracts from the two collections of Letters and an examination of the Manuscripts. Although in our view this evidence is sufficient for a demonstration, we cannot close our argument without referring to the suspicions which arose as to the genuineness of the Mahatma Letters almost from the beginning of their communication, and to the amazing character of the efforts made to dispel them.

It cannot be supposed that the resemblances of the Mahatmas’ styles to the mind and manner of Madame Blavatsky were not perceived by some of her more intimate associates, and it is clear from the correspondence that the laying of these doubts and fears to rest by means of physical devices, excuses, evasions, apologies, defences, threats, counter-accusations and ultimatums occupied quite half of the distracted author’s time. In proof of this we may say that the element of “teaching” in the Letters (such as it is) stops on p. 202, before the middle of the book; the remaining Sections (on Probation and Chelaship, the “Phoenix” Venture, the London Lodge, and Spiritualism and Phenomena) constitute an almost unbroken chronicle of conflict and self-defence.

The Case for the Defence

Some Early Sceptics Answered

(1) We have already mentioned the mischievous suggestion, thrown out at a Simla dinner table, that the word "skeptic" in K.H.'s first Letter had come over with the Founders from America. The adroit reply of H.P.B.—that this was not so, for "skeptic" was a piece of the Mahatma's pedantry, due to his familiarity with a classic tongue—was characteristic of the readiness and resource of the defence. (2) When the Letters had been "flopping" on Mr. Sinnett barely two months, it became necessary to work a phenomenon to confound the growing suspicion of his associate, Mr. Hume, and this, we believe, was the reason for "the Jhelum telegram". (3) In Letter v, K.H. regrets that Mr. Sinnett had not carried through a certain test, because, had he done so, it would have weighed heavily with the sceptics, "though our hollow but plethoric friend, Mrs. B., were even proved to be my *multum in parvo*, my letter writer, and to manufacture my epistles" (*M.L.*, p. 19). It was strange that a Master should even allow the possibility of fraud in writing of a senior Chela to a junior pupil, and very early, in any case, for the suspicion to arise.

(4) Stainton Moses was of the same mind as Hume. "S.M. regards us as *impostors* and *liars*, unless we be a *fiction*; in which case the compliment returns to H.P.B." (p. 308). (5) C. C. Massey, a very old associate of the Foundress, thinks the Mahatmas, "if not mere figments, are unscrupulous

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

confederates" (p. 314). Later, he affirms that K.H.'s Letters "are written by H.P.B." (p. 405).

Changes of Policy

In March, 1883, owing to "the incessant underground intrigues of our ex-friend Mr. Hume", a policy of retirement was dictated. "The more our actual existence be doubted—the better. As to tests and convincing proof to the Sadducees of Europe . . . this is something to be left entirely out of our future programme" (*M.L.*, p. 338). By the summer of 1884, Mr. Hume's scepticism had hardened into certainty, and he was assuring every Theosophist of note "that since the beginning of the Society *not one of the letters* alleged to have come from the Masters was genuine" (*M.L.*, p. 363).

Repeated crises in the Society had the effect of convincing Madame Blavatsky also of the wisdom of "retiring", in one sense or another, to positions of strategic advantage. When Hume had prepared fifty pages of typed matter for the Master to look over, he was thus advised by K.H.: "Send them to me either through little 'Deb' or Damodar and Djual Kul will transmit them" (*M.L.*, p. 66). The insinuation here is that H.P.B. will not handle the papers at all, but inasmuch as Deb and Damodar were her devoted attachés, and Djual Kul was K.H.'s fictitious Chela, invisible to all but her, the chances of the proofs going farther on the way to Tibet than Headquarters were very remote.

Again, K.H. writes: "I am advised to request

The Case for the Defence

that, for the future, communications intended for me may be sent to either Damodar or Henry Olcott. Madam B.'s discretion is not improving with her physiological enfeeblement" (*M.L.*, p. 396). The same suggestion again; but how do we know that Damodar or Henry Olcott will not have "discretion" enough to pass the letters on to Madam B.?

"Please no more letters through ME," writes H.P.B. herself (*B.L.*, p. 84). "I am dying from the effects of the Simla causes" (p. 97).

All the above directions imply that letters not sent through Madame B. will nevertheless reach the Master; but we cannot reconcile them with quite as many which imply that they will not, because Madame B. is the only available astral "post office", both for outward and inward mails. When Mr. Sinnett was sailing for England in 1881, he was told: "Were she to die to-day—and she is really sick—you would not receive more than two, or at most three letters from me (through Damodar or Olcott or through already established emergent agencies), and then, that reservoir of force being exhausted—our parting would be FINAL" (p. 36). This we can quite believe, and we find confirmation of it in H.P.B.'s own letters. "As he had very little to do with us before that year at Simla, so will He relapse once more into *unknowingness* and *obscurity*" (*B.L.*, p. 50). "Because, the hour is near; and that after having proved what I have to, I will bow myself out from the refined Western Society and—be no more. You may all whistle then for the Brothers" (H.P.B. in *M.L.*, p. 466).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Motives for Retirement

The motives for the strategy of retirement are obvious. Madame Blavatsky was sick of "the accursed phenomena" which had given the Society a perpetual claim on her for more and more wonders; she was also weary of casting unconvincing shadows of Mahatmas on a screen, and was longing to settle down to her *magnum opus*, *The Secret Doctrine*, which was to have the effect of the re-writing of *Isis* and the smothering of *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, Mr. Sinnett's tentative and discredited works. Moreover, the fires of hostile criticism were fiercely burning, and "exposures" and "reports" were constantly in the press; so that in the circumstances the less combustible matter she put forth, the better for all concerned. There might be, she suggested, a weekly or monthly service of secret teaching for a faithful few, but there must be no more phenomena or advertisement of the Masters. "How well it would have been had we all *never pronounced Masters' names* except in rooms with closed doors" (*B.L.*, p. 158).

Tactics of Bluff

The programme of quiet persistence in positive good works, outlined in the above extracts, could not be carried out. H.P.B. was still so dogged with accusations that she once likened herself to a wild boar, and vowed she would tear to pieces many of those open foes and false friends who pursued her.

The Case for the Defence

Nevertheless, her last letter to Mr. Sinnett (March 17, 1886) is calm and sagacious, and commends to him the tactics of bluff that she had so long successfully adopted. "If the L.L. is composed only of six members—the President the *seventh*; and this daring 'vieille garde' faces the enemy coolly, not allowing him to know how many you are and impressing him with outward signs of a multitude by the number of pamphlets, convocations and other distinct, material proofs that the society has not been shaken, that it *has not felt the blows*, that it snaps its fingers in the enemy's face, you will soon win the day" (*M.L.*, p. 485).

"If There Are No Mahatmas"

Touchstone, one of the wisest fools in fiction, says there is "much virtue in an 'if'". This seems to have been clearly perceived by a number of apologists for the Mahatmas, and expressed in the defences they put up against the suspicions and accusations of enemies and the fears of friends. "If there are no Mahatmas—then where are *we*?" We present the reader with a collection of arguments based on this formula, the first six being Madame Blavatsky's, and the rest showing well-known Theosophical sheep following the logical track of their shepherdess.

(1) "Had I been guilty once only of a deliberate purposely concocted fraud . . . at best pity and eternal contempt. If a conscious fraud—but then, where would be the Masters?"

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

(2) H.P.B. to Mrs. Sinnett. "Of course you all who believe in and respect the Masters cannot without losing every belief in them think me guilty."

(3) "And if Mahatmas are myths, I—the author of all those letters, a proclaimed fraud and worse—how can the London Lodge live?" (*M.L.*, p. 473).

How, indeed; but since "There is no Religion higher than Truth", why should the Masters, H.P.B., their inventor, and the London Lodge survive the disclosure of a true but unpalatable fact?

(4) "There are no *three* solutions but *two*. Either I have invented the Masters, their philosophy, written their letters, etc., or *I have not*. If I have and the Masters do not exist, then their handwritings *could not have existed, either*; I have invented them also; and if I have—how can I be called a 'forger'? They are *my* handwritings and I have the right to use them if I am so clever" (*M.L.*, pp. 480-1).

What has happened here? We are considering a charge of *fraud*, and the accused claims acquittal on a count of *forgery*. "*If I have invented the Masters and their handwritings, I am not a forger.*" Is there *much* virtue in these 'ifs'? We notice, too, that 'either' has come to the help of 'if', and the responsibility of choosing between fraud and forgery is put upon us. Surely the only choice worth making is between innocence and guilt, not between one deceit and another. Why does not H.P.B. plead and prove her innocence?

(5) It was clearly a mistake to charge H.P.B.

The Case for the Defence

with "forgery", for the handwritings of the Mahatmas were not those of real people, whose interests would suffer from the invention. But what has she to say to the charge of *fraud*, in her answer to a certain Mr. Solovyoff, who had written a book against her? "I told him that if people did not leave me quiet—I would end by publishing a gigantic *LIE*, that I had indeed invented the Masters and written all *myself*" (*B.L.*, p. 213). Here we have a female Samson, threatening to be "avenged of the Philistines" by bringing the whole house down on herself, in order to get peace and quiet! We call this desperate heroism; confessions, surely, are made to relieve the conscience; "gigantic lies" usually burden it the more.

(6) *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus* was a dictum once quoted by H.P.B., and the sense of it several times appears in her own writings and those of her Masters and friends. When a suspicious correspondent suggested that there were among the later Mahatma Letters *some* that were not genuine, she answered: "All the so-called letters being supported by identical proofs, they have all to stand or fall together. If one is to be doubted, then all have, and the series of letters in *The Occult World*, *Esoteric Buddhism*, etc., may be, and there is no reason why they should not be in such a case—*frauds, clever impostures, and forgeries*" (*Lucifer*, 15.10.88).

"If one is to be doubted, then all have." This is from the hand of Madame Blavatsky, who had admitted in writing two years before (as we shall

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

presently show) that many of a later series of letters were not genuine, and were written by her.

Three More Touchstones

(7) In the Appendices to *The Occult World* Mr. Sinnett endeavours to answer the accusers of Madame Blavatsky with the "either" formula: "Either she must be right or she has consciously been weaving an enormous network of falsehood in all her writings, acts, and conversations for the last eight or nine years" (9th ed., p. 179).

(8) Countess Wachtmeister, a friend and confidant of H.P.B. in her later European sojourns, also harps upon "if". She writes: "If there were no Mahatmas or Adepts . . . the teachings of that system which has been called Theosophy would be false. . . . Without these Adepts we would never have had that Society, nor would *Isis Unveiled*, the *Esoteric Buddhism* and the *Light on the Path* . . . ever have been written" (*H.P.B. and the Masters of the Wisdom*, p. 251). The hand is the hand of the Countess, but the voice and the logic are H.P.B.'s. "If there were no Mahatmas (the argument seems to run) Theosophy would be false; but Theosophy is true; therefore there are Mahatmas." We are baffled by the reasoning; if we might borrow a term from *Isis Unveiled*, we should call it "a vitiated circle".

(9) From *Dawn*, official organ of the T.S. Loyalty League, Sydney, November 1, 1924, we take our last example of the argument hanging

The Case for the Defence

on "either" and "if". "Either the Masters exist and H.P.B. was Their messenger, giving for Them the teachings that They desired the world to possess, or she was utterly fraudulent. There can be no middle way; H.P.B. was not genuine at some times and untrustworthy at others. Either she was what she purported herself to be or she was not. In the latter case the sooner the whole movement disintegrates the better; its dead corpse cannot be destroyed too soon."

"If there were no Mahatmas"—"Either she must be right"—"Either the Masters exist": let us leave these Theosophical apologists in suspense over a chasm of fearful possibility, from falling into which they are only saved by holding on to "ifs", "eithers" and "ors". Their reluctance to let go and to push the argument farther than bare supposition is natural, for a proof of fraud in Madame Blavatsky would be a proof of folly in themselves. In this respect their touching faith in her reminds us of the generous incredulity of Mr. Benjamin Goldfinch in *A Pair of Spectacles*, who, on hearing that a young gentleman of his acquaintance had become a bankrupt, exclaimed: "Impossible, I knew his father!"

Notable Admissions

"H.P.B. was not genuine at some times and untrustworthy at others," says the writer in *Dawn*. We have said there is an admission by her bearing a contrary interpretation, and we now produce it.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

In the Introduction to *The Early Teachings of the Masters*, pp. viii-ix, Mr. Jinarājadāsa says: "But we have to clearly understand that because a letter happens to be in the well-known hand of a Master, it is not necessarily all written by that Master himself. In this regard the following statement by H.P.B. is most illuminating."

The statement that follows consists of extracts from a letter from H.P.B., dated Würzburg, January 24, 1886, and confirmed verbally at Elberfeld in June, 1886. *It does not refer to the Mahatmas' Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, but to an unpublished series of answers to "personal and private questions and prayers", given by H.P.B. to "truly devoted Theosophists", *and purporting to come from the Masters*. The admission is made that these letters were "often something reflected from my own mind for the Masters would not stoop for one moment to give a thought to individual, private matters". It goes on to say:

"... It is very rarely that Mahatma K.H. dictated verbatim; ... He would say, write so and so, and the chela wrote, often without knowing one word of English. ... Therefore the only thing I can be reproached with ... is of having used Master's name when I thought my authority would go for naught, when I sincerely believed acting agreeably to Master's intentions and for the good of the cause; and ... perhaps ... of having insisted that such and such a note was from Master written in *His own handwriting*, all the time thinking *Jesuitically*, I confess, 'Well, it

The Case for the Defence

is written by His order and *in His handwriting, after all.*"

The reader will observe that although the Vice-president cites this "illuminating" statement in order to show that some of the Master's later letters *are not written by his hand*, H.P.B.'s letter goes farther than his case requires, and admits that a whole series of them *do not even come from his mind!*

"The Well-Known Script"

The statement was twice made in the Mahatma Letters* that should H.P.B. die, there would be no more communications from the Masters, and this was open to two interpretations. One was that she being the only available "receiver" of messages from Tibet, the service must necessarily close with her death, and the other was that she being the *writer* of the letters, they would as certainly cease for that reason. Consequently when she did die, and the letters were not known to be arriving, a good many people drew the second inference, and said: "How about the Mahatmas now?" The questioners were for a time put to silence by Mrs. Besant, who publicly stated—first to her old Secularist friends in August, 1891, and later to the Theosophists—that she had received letters "in the writing that H. P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging". This startling declaration was afterwards qualified in a very remarkable

* And by H.P.B. herself: "I—dead, say Society good-bye to the Masters" (*M.L.*, p. 474).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

manner, in a statement regarding William Q. Judge read at the Third Session of the European Convention of the T.S. July 12, 1894: "I believe (wrote Mrs. Besant) that he (Judge) has sometimes received messages for other people in one or other of the ways that I will mention in a moment, but not by direct writing by the Master nor by His direct precipitation; and that Mr. Judge has then believed himself to be justified in writing down *in the script adopted by H.P.B. for communication from the Master*, the message psychically received. . . . Except in the very rarest instances, the Master never personally wrote letters or directly precipitated communications. . . . When I publicly said that I had received, after H.P.B.'s death, letters in the writing H. P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging, I referred to letters given to me by Mr. Judge, and, as they were in the well-known script, I never dreamed of challenging their source. I know now that they were not written or precipitated by the Master, and also that they were done by Mr. Judge."

Attention need only be called here to the quiet admission that a certain script was "adopted by H.P.B. for communications from the Master". What does this mean? That the so-called "precipitated" Letters, which had been thrust upon the world for thirteen years as the *actual writings* of the Masters, were not written by them, but by H.P.B. Of course there is a suggestion that she was acting psychically as their authorized amanuensis, but of this mode of employment there is not a hint in *The*

The Case for the Defence

Occult World, or the Blavatsky and Mahatma Letters.

"The Work of Pupils"

The third notable admission which we bring forward was made by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater in the year 1912. In discussing certain matters with Mr. W. G. John, the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Australia, Mr. Leadbeater wrote as follows. We quote in full his references to the Mahatma Letters:

BRITISH CONSULATE, PALERMO, SICILY.

February 25th, 1912.

MY DEAR JOHN,

. . . Remember that the letters to Sinnett and Hume were *not* written or dictated directly by a Master, as we at the time supposed, but were the work of pupils carrying out general directions given to them by the Masters, which is a very different thing. . . . But we do not trouble ourselves in the least about reconciling the earlier statements—we just describe what we ourselves see, or repeat what is said to us by those whom we trust. At the beginning we did not know enough to ask questions intelligently, and we constantly misunderstood what we were told. I lived through these early days, you know, so I remember what the conditions were. . . .

Yours most cordially,

C. W. LEADBEATER.

This letter, written in the thirty-seventh year of the Mahatmic era, shows that the original legend of the Letters died hard among the rank and file, although it was apparently no longer believed by

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

the leaders. But the statement quoted above was a private one, to which, so far as we are aware, the writer never put his name in public print.

Mr. Sinnett's Last Thoughts

The fourth and most important admission we have to bring forward is a passage from *The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe*, written by Mr. A. P. Sinnett, and published after his death. Speaking of the Mahatma Letters, he says:

"I may as well at once explain, what I only came to realize myself in the progress of later years, the true character of this correspondence. The letters were not, in the beginning, what I imagined them to be—letters actually written by the Master and then forwarded by occult means either to Madame Blavatsky or deposited somewhere about the house where I should find them. They were certainly inspired by Koot Hoomi (all in the beginning bore his signature) but for the most part, if not always, were dictations to a competent clairaudient amanuensis, and Madame Blavatsky was generally the amanuensis in question" (p. 27).

So Mr. Sinnett came to see in later years that the Mahatma Letters, some of which he had published in *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, were not what he had imagined them to be. They were not written in Tibet, and "phenomenally" forwarded and deposited, but physically and fraudulently planted, by which procedure not he alone was deceived, but all those upon whose "noses" similar

The Case for the Defence

missives had been “flopped”, to say nothing of thousands of readers of his own and other Theosophical manuals.

The Letters, it is admitted, were for the most part written by Madame Blavatsky, though Mr. Sinnett clung to the belief that they were inspired by K.H. His changed view on the question of the writing at least disposes of the ingenious and contradictory theories of the production of the Letters—“precipitation”, “osmosis”, etc.—reviewed in our pages, and cuts off at a blow half the arguments for the defence with which we have been dealing in this Section.

Blavatsky at Bay

We have given an outline of the tactics of defence adopted by Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophical friends in face of the rising tide of suspicion and accusation in connection with the so-called “Indian phenomena” and the Letters. To these general defences we now add a selection of special pleas from H.P.B.’s letters, which show more intimately the state of mind into which she was thrown by these attacks. They constitute a strange medley of confession, denial, resignation and defiance, from which it would be unsafe to draw any conclusion more definite than that the writer was fighting against great odds to sustain not only her ebbing life but her sinking reputation.

The severest crisis through which H.P.B. had to pass was the issue in 1885 of a report by the

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Society for Psychical Research upon the investigation made in India by their commissioner, Mr. Hodgson. Her unofficial answers to this report, made in a number of private letters written at the time it came out, are such pitiable performances that it was fortunate for her that they were concealed from the public eye for at least thirty-seven years. We give extracts from three of them, including some passages which bear more directly on the language and authorship of the Mahatma Letters.

We take this opportunity of saying that our examination of the Mahatma and Blavatsky Letters has been made without reference to Mr. Hodgson's report. The appearance of Mr. Barker's two compilations seemed to us to call for an original and unprejudiced investigation. Mr. Hodgson was commissioned to examine only a few of the earlier letters, as well as the apparatus and agents of their delivery, and other details of the Indian Phenomena, with which we have no present concern. Our task has been in one respect greater than Mr. Hodgson's, because he did not have the advantage, accorded to us, of studying the complete series of letters in text and manuscript in both hands.

De Profundis

In Letter cxxxvi, dated London, March 17th, H.P.B. writes to Mr. Sinnett: "Besides—as a medium of communication between yourself and K.H. I am utterly useless now. . . . I have worked for

The Case for the Defence

them faithfully and unselfishly for years, and the result was, that I ruined my health, dishonoured my ancestral name . . . and finally did no good to them, very little to the society" (*M.L.*, p. 465).

Letter cxxxviii, dated Adyar, March 17th, reads: "Well, the phenomena are now all found, on the evidence of padris, and other enemies, *frauds* . . . and the Masters are dragged before the public and their names are desecrated by every rascal in Europe" (*M.L.*, p. 468).

"Ergo, no more phenomena, at least here in India. . . . Such is in brief the present situation. It began at Simla opening with the first act and now comes the *prologue* that will soon finish with my death" (*M.L.*, p. 469).

"I am tired, tired, tired and so disgusted that Death herself with her first hours of horror is preferable to this. Let the whole world with the exception of a few friends and my Hindoo Occultists, believe me a fraud. I will not deny it—even to their faces" (*M.L.*, p. 475).

Letter cxl, dated January 6, 1886, is written from Würzburg. "Well, after reading a few pages of the Report I was so disgusted with Hume's gratuitous lies and Hodgson's absurd inferences that I nearly gave up in despair. *What could I do or say against evidence on the natural worldly plane!* Everything went against me and I had to die" (*M.L.*, p. 478).

"Oh unlucky, unhappy day when I first consented to put you two in correspondence, and he . . . did not refuse my request!" (*B.L.*, p. 25).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Blavatsky's Own Hypothesis

Mr. Hodgson's conclusions with regard to the limited number of Mahatma Letters which he examined were the same as ours, therefore Madame Blavatsky's answers to him above quoted were by anticipation answers to us. He found in the Mahatma's letters bad English, French constructions and American colloquial expressions, such as would not be looked for in the writings of an Asiatic sage, and for these reasons, among others, he attributed them to H.P.B. The facts being undeniable, how did she explain them? Unable to admit that the Mahatmas, as the creatures of her brain, very naturally thought, wrote and spoke in accord with the varied experiences of her own life, she put forward an alternative explanation, which was that she had acquired her peculiarities of writing and speech from the Mahatmas. This astonishing hypothesis was not advanced as entirely her own; it was said to be framed from the matter provided for her by two timely dreams and a vision, in which her Master K.H., as will be seen, played the most important part.

Tibetan English

Two episodes in her life which H.P.B. might have remembered to her advantage, but did not, were said to have been recovered for her on the dream-plane by the initiative of the Mahatma. One was a remark made by him when she was leaving

The Case for the Defence

Tibet at the end of a long sojourn in 1870: "Well, if you have not learned much of the sacred sciences and practical occultism—you have learned, at any rate, a little English. You speak it now *only a little worse* than I do" (*M.L.*, p. 479). The second recollection was of the writing of *Isis* in New York, "in my bad English"—from dictation by the Master.

The inference from these two episodes was drawn by the Master, whose voice was heard speaking to his Chela in Würzburg. "And now put two and two together, poor blind woman. The bad English and the construction of sentences you do now, even that you have learned from me. . . . Take off the slur thrown upon you by that misguided man; explain the truth to the few friends who will believe you—for the public never will to that day that the Secret Doctrine comes out" (p. 479).

With her memory thus refreshed, H.P.B. goes on with her apology. "But an hour after, there comes Hubbe Schleiden's letter to the Countess, in which he says, that unless I explain how it is that such a similarity is found between my faulty English and Mah. K.H.'s certain expressions, the construction of sentences and peculiar Gallicisms—I stand for ever accused of deceit forgery and what not. Of course I have learned my English from him! I was taught dreadful Yorkshire by my nurse called *Governess*. From the time my father brought me to England, when fourteen . . . I gave up English altogether. . . . From fourteen till I was over forty I never spoke it, let alone writing and forgot it entirely" (p. 479).

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

"I learned to write it through *Isis*, that's sure. . . . When I had finished it I could write as well as I do now not worse not better. . . . What wonder then that *my* English and the Mahatma's show similarity. Olcott's and mine do also in our Americanisms that I picked up from him these ten years. I translating mentally all from the French would not have written sceptic with a *k*" (p. 480).

"Who shall believe all I say in this letter outside of the few? No one. . . . Yet you have to show at least one thing: occult transactions, letters, handwriting, etc. cannot be judged by the daily standards, experts, this that and the other" (p. 480).

We must make some comments upon the last paragraphs of these tragic letters, in which Madame Blavatsky tries to explain why her English and the Mahatma's "show similarity". Briefly, we are asked to believe that she did not learn English in her childhood from a governess in Russia, but in her middle age from the Mahatma in *Tibet and New York*.

We are asked to believe, further, that an exceptionally intelligent young woman, having failed to learn English in her youth and at home, neglected every opportunity of acquiring it abroad, until she had retreated to Tibet in about her thirty-fifth year, when she took it as a secondary study under a Hindu teacher of "sacred sciences". Our wonder is increased when we remember the travels and voyages made by this lady in many parts of the world, where a knowledge of English would have been her best passport. Her biographies

The Case for the Defence

tell us that she made three visits to England, three or more to India, one to Tibet in company with an Englishman, others to China, Japan, Egypt, New York, Chicago, the Rocky Mountains, San Francisco, Texas, Canada, Cape Colony, Ceylon and Singapore; and all this was done without knowing or acquiring any English!

We observe that in the dream story the Mahatma takes credit for having taught Madame Blavatsky all the English she knew by the year 1870, when she turned her steps homeward to Odessa. We are in doubt as to which was the greater marvel, her ignorance of English prior to the Tibetan retreat, or her rapid advance in it after settling there. In any case the story is not quite consistent with itself, for 1870 (when she left Tibet, a fairly proficient speaker of English) was H.P.B.'s *fortieth year*, by which date (we have just been told) she had *entirely forgotten her English!* We must believe, however, that she was sufficiently grounded in our troublesome tongue to justify her sailing to America, an English-speaking country, in 1873, and founding the Theosophical Society there in 1875. *Isis* was completed in 1877, which year H.P.B. gives us as the date of her final mastery of English.

A Great Evasion

The astonishing story outlined above must be taken as the best explanation that could be given of the "similarity" between the literary styles of Madame Blavatsky and the Mahatma K.H. He did not

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

learn from her, as was suspected; she learned from him. Yet, when we reflect on the theory propounded, we realize that (apart from its incredibility) it laboriously answers questions that have not been asked, and does not answer questions that have been asked. The composition of H.P.B.'s literary style, and the circumstances that moulded it, were never matters of doubt or enquiry. "Hubbe Schleiden's letter to the Countess" did not ask why "Gallicisms" were present in H.P.B.'s writing, *but why they were present in K.H.'s.* (And he might have added Morya's, for both Masters were inexplicably "frenchified".)

It is no rare thing for a native of one country to write the language of another copiously but incorrectly, to base this less known language on the forms of one better known, and to acquire by residence in foreign countries the fleeting vernacular of many times and places. All these things Madame Blavatsky unquestionably did, and not one of them required explanation. The facts that do require explanation, however, are the following: (1) That the literary styles of two Asiatic sages are non-Oriental; (2) That they are European, modern and bi-lingual, that their English elements are frequently faulty, their construction and spelling showing the writers are "translating mentally from the French"; (3) that they contain large infusions of "Americanism"; (4) that the English literary references made by the reputed Adepts are almost invariably incorrect, the Latin faulty, but the French immaculate.

SECTION XIX

THE THEOSOPHICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE

WITH the closing of the preceding Section our task is all but completed. We now know who wrote the Mahatma Letters to Mr. A. P. Sinnett and other persons; and in the course of our statement of the Problem, the Investigation and the Demonstration, we have learned how much or how little to value their contents. The Letters, however, do not stand alone. They form the basis of a superstructure which, as to its magnitude, is immense and as to its character and claim, stupendous. If this basis be proved unsound, the superstructure must collapse.

The Occult Hierarchy

The present Section serves to indicate in a formal manner the principal elements of the Theosophical edifice which, during nearly fifty years, has been built up before our eyes. The Mahatma Letters introduced and exhibited to the world a small company of persons variously called "The Universal Brotherhood", the "Masters of the Wisdom" and the "Occult Hierarchy". Whether or not there are such orders of beings, it has not been our purpose to inquire; it is sufficient to say that if Madame Blavatsky had on her own authority

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

affirmed their existence and functions, the world would have been free to accept or reject her ideas as it pleased. But she went further ; she endeavoured, as our investigation shows, to compel the world to believe her, by attempting to create an objective demonstration of the existence and work of certain Mahatmas, and to cast a glamour over her contemporaries by a series of marvels which many were unable to resist. Thus the occult hierarchy was in the first generation of Theosophists organized and revealed with a wealth of personal detail, until it became fixed in the imagination of believers. The two Masters of 1880 were soon multiplied to ten, and later to sixteen; they included "Hilarion" the Greek (identified with Iamblichus, the Neoplatonist) and the "Count" (identified with the Comte de St. Germain of the eighteenth century). As a concession to Christians, "the Master Jesus", after due trial and probation, was admitted into the company of the elect.

As soon as the Indian belief in Reincarnation had been definitely accepted by Mr. Sinnett and his successors, Madame Blavatsky's Masters were provided by Mr. Leadbeater with an occult genealogy of their previous lives, which embedded her inventions more deeply in reality. K.H. was declared to be a reincarnation of the Chinese Philosopher Lao-tze, while, by the bounty of fortune, he appeared in Europe in the flesh of Pythagoras of Samos. Thus we had the surprising spectacle of a Mahatma's ancestral "double" gracing two continents at once, as soon as his-

The Theosophical Superstructure

torians were able to show that the Chinese sage and the Greek philosopher had been contemporaries in the sixth century B.C.

Above the Tibetan Masters—who, after all, with their earthly jollity, their swearing and smoking, were very human creatures—Madame Blavatsky had given us faint glimpses of other and greater beings. In the course of time, through Mr. Sinnett and the smaller literary fry of his day, but mostly by the labours of Mr. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant, we have been told the names and functions of the occult officials who govern the world.

H. P. Blavatsky's "Chohans" and the "Maha-Chohan" are still in being, but we have also been allowed to hear of The Lord Vaivasvata Manu (extracted from Vedic legend), The Bodhisattva, The Lord Maitreya (both adopted from Māhayāna Buddhism), "The Director of Evolution", and even of "the Great King" of the Universe Himself. Mr. Leadbeater has further added to the courts of heaven whole choirs of angels and minor beings, corresponding to the *devas* and *gandhavas* of India. The Pauline and Gnostic hierarchies were similarly patronized and incorporated into the Theosophical Superstructure, to secure the adherence of both orthodox and heretical Christians.

Constructing a Cosmology

In the branch of Cosmology the Theosophical Superstructure has risen to great heights. How

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

Madame Blavatsky must have smiled* to see poor Mr. Sinnett patiently building up, storey by storey, the pagodas of *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*—with nothing more substantial than a pack of cards out of her own cabinet of magic! And what will the Theosophists think and say—who have made Mr. Sinnett's two books the *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* of their Bible—when they see these paper edifices collapse before the first breath of truth?

The Tibetan Twins

The ethnologists and anthropologists of Science, who were ever doing their best to present a reasoned history of man, received scant respect from Blavatsky, Sinnett, Leadbeater and Besant. Just as the Mahatmic theory about chains and rounds of planets has become the stuff out of which thousands of “propaganda lectures” have been made, so the history of the human race, on Blavatsky's initiative, has been dislocated from the beginning. Such works as *Man, A Fragment of Forgotten History*, by Two Chelas, *Rents in the Veil of Time*; *Man, Whence, How and Whither?* and *The Lives of Alcyone* lay claim to an historical omniscience which

* This is no mere figure of speech. H.P.B. made her Mahatmas reproach Mr. Sinnett for rushing into print with his books. When critics found fault with *Esoteric Buddhism* she and Subba Row defended it in *The Theosophist*. But when she published *The Secret Doctrine* she threw him over, and wrote to the critics (Maitland and Kingsford): “We were obliged to support him then because he represented us, but when the *secret doctrine* was concerned it was necessary to tell the truth” (*Life of A.K.*, Vol. II, p. 160).

The Theosophical Superstructure

rests ultimately on the Mahatmic revelation. In the two last-named books, which until lately were the accepted New Testament of Theosophy, human history for millions of years is represented by Mr. Leadbeater to a credulous world. We are assured that he and Mrs. Besant have found out all these things by means of clairvoyant investigation. Like the landlady of an inn who shows her customers "the chair in which Mr. Pickwick used to sit", so they exhibit in the smallest detail the things that were done and said by the Mahatmas on the stage of the world for thousands of generations. These Tibetan twins, it appears, have been mixed up in every great event; they have married many beautiful women, ruled every nation, taught all cultures, and founded all religions. Even in these latter days they have outdone their past by founding a World Religion, which was promulgated on behalf of the Maha-Chohan at Kensington Town Hall on October 12, 1925. O, Helena Petrovna, thou art mighty yet!

Buddhist-Liberal Catholics

In the realm of psychology, the doctrine of the "Seven Principles of Man", first educed with tortuous efforts from ancient Indian books, and passed on for publication to Mr. Sinnett in the flimsies of the 'eighties, finally became the stock-in-trade of later teachers. Although the early Upanishads and philosophical Sutras of the Indians had speculated on the septenary doctrine for

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

centuries, it was not to them that Theosophists turned for support, but to the petty plagiarisms of the Letters, afterwards condensed into the shilling Manuals of Mr. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant.

In regard to Theology, later Theosophical writers have followed the Mahatmas' lead into a stifling fog of contradictory metaphysics. Beginning as Buddhists, they denied God; continuing as Hindus, they affirmed Him as the Parabrahm of the Vedāntins. Their latest exploit has been to found, *in the name of the Masters and by their orders*, a Theosophical Liberal Catholic Church, in which they celebrate the Mass and recite the Apostles' Creed.* We may add that in an earlier clairvoyant "revelation", Mr. Leadbeater had declared that the Apostles had never existed. It became necessary for him to change his mind.

Koot Hoomi as King-Maker

Not only in respect of its doctrine, but also of its official appointments, has the Theosophical Society been to this day swayed by belief in the Mahatmas' authority and power. It will be remembered that the reading of a telegram from some mysterious and unnamed source ordering the re-appointment of Mrs. Kingsford to the Presidency of the London Lodge, closed for a time the rift in that body's ranks between the Hermetist and the Buddhist sections. Although the message came through

* We have witnessed the rite at the Liberal Catholic Church in Caledonian Road, London.

The Theosophical Superstructure

“Koot Hoomi”, a letter from him to the members declared it to be “the express wish of the Chohan himself” (*M.L.*, p. 398). A month later the advice of the telegram was admitted to be an “unusual, not to say arbitrary interference with the reserved elective rights of a Branch” (*M.L.*, p. 406), and a decision by ballot was recommended in its stead. Nevertheless, the precedent of the telegram was remembered and followed in a later crisis, when the Presidency of the parent society was involved. In 1908, Colonel Olcott, Madame Blavatsky’s successor, lay paralysed and awaiting his end. The Master K.H. (so we have it in the words of Mrs. Besant) appeared at his bedside and “ordered him to nominate me to the Presidency”. This alleged visitation took place seven years after the death of Madame Blavatsky, Koot Hoomi’s inventor and prompter. One begins to see that there is scarcely a limit to what a mythical Master can do, so long as it is something that his credulous disciples can desire and believe.

Mahatmic Support to the Theosophical Society

It is hardly too much to say that if each part of the Superstructure mentioned in this Section were described in detail, it would require a volume almost as large as this one, for it would have to contain a history of all those bodies of a Theosophical character which in later years built their nests in the chambers and turrets of the main edifice, and it would have to delineate the features,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

characters and careers of the leading persons in the neo-Theosophical world. Yet the barest outline of this history must here be given, in order to introduce some specially significant features of later development.

As the reader will have learned from earlier Sections, the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875, at which date it consisted virtually of no one but the founders. The Mahatma Letters only began to appear after the migration to India in 1880, so that for five years the Society did not rest upon them in any architectonic sense. Its lowest literary stratum was in fact the "Luxor Letters" and those other occasional missives from the beyond which we have quoted from *Letters of the Masters of the Wisdom*.

Our account of the delivery of the Mahatma Letters of the 'eighties will have left no doubt in the reader's mind that without their aid nothing could have been accomplished more substantial than the formation of a few occultist literary coteries. Mr. Sinnett and his materially minded associates of the Indian services would never have been converted to a belief in pseudo-Himalayan marvels, nor would Mrs. Besant have been drawn from atheism to credulity by reading for review *The Secret Doctrine*, had it not been based, as it professed to be, on the revelations of the writers of the Letters. More than this: if we were to tell of the building up of the Society, stage by stage, and, especially, of the Esoteric Section—commonly known as the "E.S."—we should have to show

The Theosophical Superstructure

that every member received into that select inner body was obliged to accept the authority of the Masters. Documents emanating from the "E.S." which have come into our hands establish the fact of this claim, even although the text of the Masters' Letters did not see the light of day until 1923.

Rifts in the Superstructure

The Theosophical movement very early split up into a number of parts owing allegiance to different leaders. Mrs. Katherine Tingley was the chief rival to Mrs. Besant in America, and other groups made their appearance in that country. The Society whose headquarters were settled at Adyar became the largest and most widely diffused section of the movement and, without doubt, its leaders and officers were held by the invisible nexus of the Esoteric Section to the President, Mrs. Besant, and through her to the Masters.

The special function of Mr. Leadbeater in the progress of the movement was to support Mrs. Besant's authority and to supply, from time to time, fuller information about the Masters; and his chief title to fame in this respect was, and is, his composition of the millennial history of mankind, stretching far into the past and future. Yet there were elements in his teaching which put a severe strain on the loyalty of many Theosophists and led to serious secessions from and much discontent within the Society.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The World Teacher

Outstanding among Mr. Leadbeater's literary and occult inventions is the life-story of "Alcyone", the aeonian name given to the child Krishnamurti, upon whom his discerning and clairvoyant eyes had fallen about the second decade of this century. The world knows the broad outlines of this story so well that there is no need to repeat it here: how the Hindu youth was acclaimed on these credentials as "the one who should come" as a World Teacher, while his younger brother, Nityānanda, was destined to be a World Ruler.

It can be stated without the possibility of denial that, from about 1911 onwards, the greater part of the Theosophical Society affiliated to Adyar accepted the belief in the coming of a World Teacher, and sat at the feet of Krishnamurti, as boy and man, for over ten years, in India, Europe and America—indeed, wherever he went. And although the doctrines of the now published Letters lend no support to the idea of such a mission, yet not one word of Mr. Leadbeater's story could have been written except as a sequel to the Mahatmic correspondence. For this product of the mind and hand of H.P.B. had given to K.H., M. and others such a reality that it was an easy matter for the gifted visionary who succeeded her to place his own discovery and the President's protégé secure among such venerable companions.

The Theosophical Superstructure

A Rising and Sinking Star

In December, 1925, at Adyar, Madras, Mrs. Besant collected a company of several thousands of her adherents, and on Christmas Day repeated officially a series of pronouncements which had been rehearsed under very favourable circumstances in Holland during the month of August.

The "World Religion" was foretold and its details revealed in a pamphlet of two pages, which was thereafter circulated to every member of the Theosophical Society. The coming of the World Teacher was indicated as imminent, and it was stated clearly that he, known in the Buddhist world as "the Bodhisattva", the "Lord Maitreya", and in the Christian world as "the Lord Christ", would take possession of the prepared body of his disciple Mr. Krishnamurti.

In order to fulfil an educational function, the "Theosophical World University" was declared in being, of which the President herself was the Rector, Bishop Arundale Vice-Rector and Bishops Leadbeater and Wedgwood the Directors of Special Studies.

What now has become of this marvellous outgrowth from the Mahatmic stem nursed and watered by Mr. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant? Where is the Order of the Star in the East? It has been dissolved by the very messenger whom it was founded to herald. Thirty thousand members—and subscribers—have been abandoned by their titular head; the Theosophical Society, which,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

though its leaders gave the youth his exalted status, has been rejected by him together with its basic doctrines. At this date (1936) Mr. J. Krishnamurti is an independent teacher who denies nine-tenths or more of what was predicted of him by his chief sponsors—indeed, his creators. His coming and his going have both shaken the Society to its foundations and left it devoid of its sensational activities of the post-war years.

Disruption

The Society is now roughly divided into two unequal groups: the larger, which adhered blindly, silently and loyally to Mrs. Besant—and now to her memory; the smaller, which lives by the slogan “Back to Blavatsky” and ties itself to *The Secret Doctrine*. Outside the Adyar Society are other “Blavatsky” groups, including one of which Mr. Barker, the compiler of the Letters, is the London representative. Here, of course, the *Letters* are the gospel.

Other annexes to the main Society still exist in derelict form. The Liberal Catholic Church has not been dissolved, like the Order of the Star, but it no longer performs any hierarchical function for the main Society. The Theosophical University retains the services of a single peripatetic professor, but can boast of no colleges or graduates. The Theosophical Educational Trust has been wound up and its properties are sold or for sale. The names of the Lodges of the Society are preserved in print

The Theosophical Superstructure

in most countries of the world, but their membership is substantially reduced and many of them suffer from the disruption caused by Krishnamurti's exit and other defections. In a word, the Theosophical Superstructure, which could never have been raised but for the Mahatma Letters, is crumbling before our eyes. This book ought to bring it level with the ground—in spite of the eleventh-hour endeavour to sustain it, now to be recounted.

Clairvoyant Confirmation

We have now to treat of a part of the Superstructure which, from its being added to the building so late in time as the year 1925, might aptly be called "The Coping Stone". This is a book by Mr. Leadbeater entitled *The Masters and the Path*, published in America two years after the appearance of *The Mahatma Letters*. Although it makes no direct reference to them, it is clear to a reader of both books that the later one is a hastily produced but careful supplement to the earlier. Accepting, as the writer is bound to do, the Mahatmas' own fragmentary accounts of their characteristics, private lives and abodes, he professes to use his clairvoyant faculty to confirm and elaborate the vague outlines presented in the Letters.

In the second chapter, Mr. Leadbeater undertakes to say a few words about the daily life and surroundings of the Masters as a large hierarchical group, but he only fulfils this promise in regard to our two Mahatmas; which is another indication

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

of the real purpose of the book. We are told that these Masters always appear impressive, noble, dignified, holy and serene, yet they are not without humour. Master Morya, we are told, once said that it was impossible to make progress on the occult path without a sense of humour, which is a lame apology for his own crude and elephantine jests in the Mahatma Letters, and perhaps also a justification of Mr. Leadbeater's smaller pleasantries. Both Masters are said to be fine-looking men, apparently in the prime of life, but by ordinary standards, really old. M. is a dark Rajput King, of imperious dignity. He speaks in short, terse sentences, as if he were accustomed to be instantly obeyed. He first met H.P.B. in Hyde Park, when he came with other Indian Princes to the Great Exhibition in 1851. At the same time, it is nice to know, M. took notice of the little boy Leadbeater (as the boy did of him), a fact which the Bishop learned from the Master's own lips in after years. K.H. is a Kashmiri prince, pale-skinned as an Englishman; in Tibet he rides a big bay horse, while M.'s mount is white.

The Happy Valley

Mr. Leadbeater describes a certain valley in Tibet where, he says, three of the Masters—Morya, Kuthumi and Djwal Kul—are living at the present time. K.H. and M. occupy houses on opposite sides of a narrow ravine. Beneath the first house is the entry to a vast subterranean occult museum, con-

The Theosophical Superstructure

taining lifelike images of every type of man that has lived on the earth, models in *alto relieveo* of all the changing surfaces of geological time, as well as models of ancient cities. Books and manuscripts load the shelves; among the latter there are authentic writings of Buddha and Christ. What a pity that these valuable documents have not been brought to light, but have been ousted by the Mahatmas' Letters, as being of more worth to the world!

The valley is sheltered and faces south, and though the surrounding country is under snow during the winter, no snow has been seen clairvoyantly near the Masters' houses. In confirmation of the above statements, a picture of the Masters' ravine is given. If the truth must be told, however, it bears more resemblance to an imaginative painting on a dinner-plate than to the views of Tibetan landscape made familiar to the general public in "The Epic of Everest". There is not a sign of distant snow-capped mountains, and the architecture of a stone building, half hidden in the trees, bears no trace of the Indo-Tibetan style, but is in the nondescript manner of an English seaside tea-garden or grotto. A dark bearded horseman (who might be Morya) is climbing up the path, a peasant (who might be Djwal Kul) is paddling in the brook, which ought to be, according to the properties of nature, a rushing stream. Something like a cross surmounts the gable of the two-storey building, the portals and windows of which are arched with a very bad brickwork.

A plan of Kuthumi's house or bungalow is given.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

There are three rooms on the ground floor; they are central-heated and surrounded by a verandah. The main room is for teaching and receptions, the second for study, and the third for sleeping. K.H. is credited with being a great linguist, a fine English scholar, and learned in French and German—Russian is not mentioned; he has thousands of books and a typewriter. He is also a musician and a composer; he plays on a three-manual organ and piano combined, which has been built in Tibet. The organ pipes are in the roof of the bungalow, and when the instruments are played, the “Music Devas” are invoked by magnetism to lend their loud-speaking aid.

After Fifty Years

A comparison of the foregoing matter with the particulars we have gathered into Sections iv and v of this book will support our suggestion that the writer of *The Masters and the Path* has purposely retraced, though with a firmer hand and an air of originality, the faint and disconnected outlines of subjects touched upon fifty years before in *The Letters*. The personal traits of the Masters are carefully retained, but are enlarged almost to heroic proportions, doubtless to fit them for the greater tasks of the time.

To speak first of Master Morya, the Hyde Park cavalcade of 1851 is not mentioned in *The Letters*, but the first encounter between H.P.B. and her “guide”, by the waters of the Serpentine at night,

The Theosophical Superstructure

is recorded in Sinnett's biographical *Incidents* and Besant's *H.P.B.* In *The Letters* the Rajput's princely airs are less emphasized than his more homely traits. Mr. Sinnett, it is true, once addressed him as "Illustrious", and the word clung to him for years; he also described M. to K.H. as "an imperious sort of chap", and was not allowed to forget the phrase. Mr. Leadbeater is clairvoyantly struck by the same characteristic, and uses the same word—"imperious".

After the American era, M. was generally called "the Boss" by his pupil H.P.B., and in moments of effusion (says K.H.) "she has made of M. an Apollo of Belvedere, the glowing description of whose physical beauty, made him more than once start in anger, and break his pipe while swearing like a true—Christian" (p. 313). In body M. is "bulky", in temper "laughing" and "brusque", in attainments he is no scholar and hates writing—so much so that he does it badly, as the MSS. show.

K.H. does not appear from Mr. Leadbeater's account to have been in the procession of Princes to the Crystal Palace in 1851, yet the Letters tell us he was a tireless horseman in the steep defiles of Tibet, and so they prepare us for introduction to the big brown bay of to-day. K.H.'s home is mentioned twice in the *Mahatma Letters* and once by H.P.B., but the veils of secrecy and modesty obscure its site and its interior comforts. Indeed, most of the references to the Masters' abodes go to form the idea of simple and almost stoical retreats, suited to the habits of unworldly philo-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

sophers. We confess we wondered, on first reading about them, what accommodation there was for the large class of "young and innocent chelas", the great dictionaries and the extensive libraries mentioned in the Letters, but now that we learn, through Mr. Leadbeater's clairvoyant survey, of the capacity and contents of the Master's bungalow and its subterranean chambers, everything becomes clear. Here is given the very plan of it, with the students' benches and the Master's arm-chair.

We remember, too, that it was here that M., as deputy correspondent with A.P.S., once occupied the house, and wrote therefrom Letter XIII, in full view of "the iceberg now before me, in our K.H.'s home" (p. 76)—which, strange to say, has melted from the scene in C.W.L.'s picture. It was here also that this Mahatma, taking the advantage of the presence of a keyboard, illustrated an argument in "Septenary Cosmogony" with the following musical simile: "Go to your forte-piano and execute upon the lower register of keys the seven notes of the lower octave—up and down. Begin *pianipiano*: *crescendo* from the first key and having struck *fortissimo* on the last *lower* note go back *diminuendo* getting out of your last note a hardly perceptible sound—*morendo pianissimi*. The first and the last notes will represent to you the first and last spheres, in the cycle of evolution the highest! The one you strike *once* is our planet. Remember you have to reverse the order on the forte-piano:*

* Evidently the three-manual "organ" had not yet been built in the bungalow.

The Theosophical Superstructure

begin with the seventh note, not with the first.”

Is not Master Morya in rather deep waters in using these “Western” musical terms? He seems to admit they are not part of his own knowledge when he adds: (“as I luckily for my illustration find it printed in one of the musick pieces in K.H.’s old portmanteau.”) Why not “portfolio” for “musick pieces”, if we may be so bold as to ask? As for the illustration itself, since we can hardly make sense of its literal terms, still less can we grasp the “septenary cosmogony” it is intended to make clear.

An Illusive Chela

Let us now give some facts of fifty years ago relating to Djwal Kul, the third now living Master, known to us formerly as K.H.’s Tibetan Chela. He is first mentioned in the Letters as a transmitter of messages from India to Tibet (p. 66) and appears next as “D.J.K.”, handy with a compass and pen in drawing for his Master an explanatory diagram of the Septenary Cosmogony (p. 86). Soon after the publication of *The Occult World* he appears again as the writer or precipitator of the first six of the Mahatma Letters, in which connection he is charged by K.H. with having foolishly invented, as half a *nom de plume*, the words “Lal Singh” in his master’s signature, and writes what will be remembered as the fatal “Kiddle Letter” (p. 364).

D.K. is called “Juala Khool” by Master Morya, and under the safe *nom de plume* of “Reviewer”,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

was authorized to write a few notes in *The Theosophist* in answer to an article by Mr. Oxley (p. 270). He accordingly does so in Letter cxxv, restoring to his Master the rejected suffix of "Lal Singh", but writing it in the hand of Damodar! D.K.'s letter is signed "Gjual-Khool mxxx", which might seem to be the true spelling of his name, had it not been written six or more other ways by his Masters (pp. 453 -4) and as many by H.P.B. K.H. had apparently received criticism on the score of this extraordinary variety, hence he tries to settle the point in Letter LIII: "The second letter, I think, was thrown on his table by Dj. Khool (the real spelling of whose name is Gjual, but not so phonetically") (p. 298).

Djwal Kul's last-mentioned feat in *The Mahatma Letters* was an astral penetration of the bulwarks of the SS. *Clan Drummond* and an appearance in Madame Blavatsky's cabin at sea *ex Algiers*, when he asked for a piece of paper and wrote a letter for his Master to Mr. Sinnett (p. 467). From *The Blavatsky Letters* we learn that this Oriental Will-o'-the-wisp paid similar astral visits to Madame Blavatsky and the Countess Wachtmeister in their European abodes, much to the amazement of the former's clairaudient but not clairvoyant nurse.

So much for Gjual Khool, as we find him in "the basis"; as already said, he has his higher place in "the Superstructure". Since no one but H.P.B. has ever professed to have seen this Chela face to face, and since the only letter over his signature

The Theosophical Superstructure

is written in the known hand of Damodar the "Desinherited", it is evident what useful material support Mr. Leadbeater has given to his dubious existence by recognizing him clairvoyantly as now a Master in Tibet, and holding pleasant conferences with him on the roof of Adyar Headquarters.

Farewells

It is enough. A very large but quite needless book might be written to show how from every leaf of the Mahatma Letters the seeds of falsity have for years been scattered into unguarded intellectual ground, so that fields properly apportioned to Religion, Philosophy, and Science have grown up into a Theosophical jungle, in which lurk foes as dangerous to the mind as are snakes and man-eaters to the body. But further than this we must not moralize on the spectacle revealed in this Section, for it is now our duty to part company with the Mahatmas, and dismiss them—in K.H.'s own phrase—to their "kingdom of silence once more".

Truth to tell, the Tibetan Brothers made their virtual exit as long ago as the year 1884. Morya took his leave, we think, soon after the Piccadilly séance at Sam Ward's rooms, and Koot Hoomi's last letter reached London some time in the following year, and reminded Mr. Sinnett that the state of Madame Blavatsky's health and other conditions portended the close of the correspondence.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

In the public lectures of his closing career the venerable Mr. Sinnett used to speak of "my lofty friends" and their continued guidance.

Readers of *Our Mutual Friend* will remember how two creations of the genius of Charles Dickens played parts of mischief in that interesting story. After the exposure of their frauds, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Lammell were observed from a balcony walking arm in arm down the street; they turned a corner and were never seen again. Just such a sudden and final disappearance do we wish for our no less fictional Mahatmas. Their end cannot be tragical, for their career was a sort of comedy, and to be found out was their proper fate and sufficient punishment. We have no cause to be angry with them, for after all, they did not write the Mahatma Letters. Like marionettes manipulated by invisible strings, they strutted and capered for fifty years on the Theosophical stage, and the big words uttered from their little bodies passed current for verity in the world's five continents. They fascinated, instructed and deceived us; moreover, they have since amused us in days that were dark. Therefore we owe them some gratitude, not only for their entertainment, but for the profitable companionship of the amiable members of Theosophical Society whom they drew together to witness it. They introduced us to many whom we hope to count upon as life-long friends, and to none whom we can think of as enemies.

The Theosophical Superstructure

The Curtain Falls

"It seems to me", wrote the Countess Wachtmeister to Mr. Sinnett in January, 1886, "that it is time now to hang a veil before the Mahatmas" (*B.L.*, p. 280). With this opinion we agree, though in a different sense from that implied by the lady, and we hope that our labours throughout this book have helped to weave a curtain that will effectually prevent such a play as we have witnessed ever being acted again.

So much for the players and the play; but what shall be said of the playwright? Truly, her career was no comedy; even as we read it in the feigned passion and dispassion of *The Mahatma Letters*, it was a perilous pretence; while in *The Blavatsky Letters* it was a tragedy too dark for scorn, too human to excite no pity. Yet, in a little while, the curtain must cover her, too. "He who lives more lives than one, more deaths than one must die," writes a modern poet. Having enjoyed a second life in her creations, in their death Madame Blavatsky has earned a second death. It is sad, but it had to be.

SECTION XX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

BEFORE we carry our work to its final stage, it will be convenient to interpose a brief summary of the facts and arguments brought forward in the previous Sections. In the course of our examination of miscellaneous publications and scattered documentary references we have traced the sources and development of the alleged Mahatmic revelations in the following series of events:

1. The existence of the Mahatmas (under the title of "Brothers") as guides, protectors and teachers of Madame Blavatsky, was privately made known to her relations, friends and philosophical associates prior to the formation of the Theosophical Society in 1875. The first extant letter from a supposed Tibetan Master, addressed to H.P.B.'s relations at Odessa, is dated on arrival November 11, 1870, and the letters of "Serapis", an Egyptian Brother, were communicated to Colonel Olcott in 1875.
2. In the sixth year of the Society (1881) the existence in Tibet of the two Indian Mahatmas was publicly announced by Mr. Sinnett in *The Occult World*, and parts of letters from one of them to him were printed.
3. In the seventh year of the Society (1882) the substance of the philosophical system attri-

Summary and Conclusion

buted to the two Mahatmas, derived from a series of letters received by Mr. Sinnett, was published by him in *Esoteric Buddhism*.

4. Letters signed by the Mahatmas were received by Mr. Sinnett until the tenth year of the Society (1885) when the communications abruptly ceased. Meanwhile, in spite of suspicions and denials in certain quarters, the existence of the Mahatmas was emphatically affirmed, and Madame Blavatsky constantly asserted, in public and private, her close touch with them, and her dependence on them for her official status, occult knowledge and literary productions.
5. In the eleventh year of the Society (1886) Madame Blavatsky published *The Secret Doctrine* (Vols. I and II) written by her in retirement in Germany, in which she reaffirmed the existence and authority of the Mahatmas as wise and secret teachers of herself and others, and included extracts from letters attributed to them.
6. In the forty-eighth year of the Society (1923) a small number of the Mahatmas' Letters which had been preserved at the Theosophical Society's headquarters, were published under the title *Early Teachings of the Masters*. A few months later a complete collection of the Letters received by the late A. P. Sinnett was published in London as an unofficial compilation by Mr. A. T. Barker.
7. The appearance of the complete text of the

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

early and private teaching gave the first public knowledge of the inner history of the Theosophical Society and of the sources and development of its doctrine, and made possible a critical study of the Mahatma Letters and the solution of the vexed problem of their genuineness.

8. The examination of *The Mahatma Letters* undertaken by us resulted in the collection of every available personal particular concerning their alleged authors, also in obtaining a general view of their teachings in religion, science and philosophy, and in making a study of their literary style and the manner of delivery of their communications. On each of these points the claim for the Mahatmas' authorship of the Letters appeared to us to fail.
9. The publication in 1924 of *The Blavatsky Letters* together with the concurrent appearance in *The Theosophist* of miscellaneous remains of Madame Blavatsky, afforded the first opportunity for a comparison of the styles of the known and the unknown writers, resulting in proofs, too numerous and strong to ignore, that the Mahatma Letters were spurious, and were written by Madame Blavatsky. To this demonstration we were able to add the proof, from the examination of the manuscripts, that the handwriting and stationery of the Letters told externally the same tale as their literary contents.
10. Finally, we adduce four notable admissions by Theosophical leaders tending to support our

Summary and Conclusion

conclusion. Madame Blavatsky confesses that she did actually fabricate and attribute to the Mahatmas a later series of letters. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Sinnett both admit that H.P.B. was the writer, though not the author, of the Mahatma Letters, and Mr. Leadbeater states that the Letters were not written by the Mahatmas.

The Problem of Motive

It is often held to be incumbent upon one who makes and sustains a charge of fraud that he should proceed to reveal the motives by which the accused person was actuated; and if he cannot do this, his argument is liable to be regarded as inconclusive. Madame Blavatsky has more than once profited by the appeal to this test. Her accusers have been called upon to show what benefit she could have obtained by the practice of the suspected deceptions; and as a rule they have failed to do so. We may give an instance of this. Mr. Hodgson, of the Society for Psychical Research, at the end of an exhaustive enquiry into "the Indian phenomena" and an adverse report upon them, allowed himself to be drawn into the dangerous course of alleging a motive. He could not explain the reason or reasons for Madame Blavatsky's actions. He therefore supposed she was in India for some purpose other than that she professed, and he fell back upon the already repudiated thesis of the "Russian spy". It was, we think, an unnecessary and an unreasonable sug-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

gestion. Madame Blavatsky and her "Masters" were certainly mischief-makers in many spheres, and at least practical jokers in some, but they did not dabble very effectively in high politics. A Russian spy would have been well paid from St. Petersburg and well watched from Simla; Madame Blavatsky was neglected by both. Moreover, it is now clear that she would have had little time for political spying if she wrote a hundred and twenty Mahatma Letters and concurrently hundreds of her own in four years, and edited the Theosophical Magazines as well. Mr. Hodgson therefore spoiled his case by this too simple explanation. For a single political motive, such as he suggested, a score of deep-rooted personal motives, conscious or unconscious, might have been probed. To his damaging Report on facts and discoveries at Adyar Headquarters, Mr. Hodgson would have had to add a long exploration into the depths of a strange personality, and even then, we think, he would have failed to pluck out the heart of her mystery.

When a task such as we have undertaken has been duly performed, it is unlikely that we should admit the obligation to append an inquiry into the mind and motives of Madame Blavatsky, or allow that without a further argument our case was inconclusive. Nevertheless, it is natural that both we and our readers, having realized the implication of the facts adduced, should turn upon and contemplate, perhaps with a new question in our minds, the unique phenomenon of fifty years of fraud which has been laid bare in these pages. Why,

Summary and Conclusion

one would ask, do people do this kind of thing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Whom does it benefit, and in what way?

Three Suggested Motives

Having proved in these pages that Madame Blavatsky foisted an illiterate apocrypha upon the infant Theosophical Society in 1880, and attempted thereby to foist it upon the world, we propose to satisfy inquirers as to her motives by making three interpretative suggestions. First, we trace the power-seeking motive as the original and main cause of her deceptions; second, we note an animus against Christianity, both exhibited and avowed, which led her to the extremity of abuse and to tactics of opposition void of moral scruple; third, we perceive that her earlier deceptions placed her in positions which in time became untenable, so that necessity compelled her to adopt greater and more unabashed measures of defence.

It is clear to a reader of the sketches of Madame Blavatsky's life which have come down to us from several friendly sources that she was from her childhood a person of exceptionally strong and independent character. Consequently it was in the circle of her own relations that she first exercised her extraordinary talents. It is therefore significant as an interpretation of her later career that the first "Mahatma Letter" which she produced should have been one of merely domestic concern, suggesting that while travelling abroad she was in receipt

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

of some kind of metaphysical favour and protection. This message would naturally herald her return to Odessa with an accretion of personal power, and would build up a reputation which it was both desirable and necessary to maintain. Even if we may speculate that this experiment in literary imposture was Madame Blavatsky's "first disobedience", it could not be her last; its success would tempt her to repeat it, or its failure would compel her to outdo it. Events proved that she did one or the other, according to the predicament in which she was placed.

The Anti-Christian Motive

Except for the fact that a strong bias against Christianity was formally avowed and patently exhibited in the public and private writings of Madame Blavatsky, we would gladly have avoided alleging it as a motive for some of her deceptive practices; but because of its interpretative value in respect of her character and our thesis, we must trouble ourselves and our readers with its presentation.

We assume from the fact of H.P.B.'s birth into a Russian aristocratic family that she was a baptized member of the Orthodox Eastern Church, and familiar with its faith and doctrines. Her travels in four continents would have given her opportunities enough of observing the active operations of other religions of the world, and her literary studies would have opened her mind to their

Summary and Conclusion

theoretical content. Yet, with this vast panorama before her, not one religion came under her lash save Christianity, and of the three organic divisions of this religion, only one, the Orthodox Eastern, was immune from her critical castigation. We hardly deduce from the latter fact that Orthodoxy was her first religious love, but it seems certain from her writings that Roman Catholicism was the object of her greatest hate, and that English and American Protestantism came only a little way behind it as the objects of her deepest scorn.

H.P.B.'s Own Avowal

We have said that a special animus against Christianity was officially avowed, a fact which we would not have suspected and were surprised to discover in a place no less authoritative than the Preface to *Isis Unveiled* (p. xlvii).

After giving the historical facts as to the foundation of the Theosophical Society, the Preface reveals the existence of two objects subsidiary to the three generally known. One was the intention "to collect and disseminate among Christians information about Oriental religions and philosophy". Inasmuch as this information, to be edifying to Christians, would naturally consist of matter creditable to the Orient, no complaint can be made of the favour shown to them in the shape of a mission for their enlightenment. But the Preface goes on to disclose a much more startling object than the one just mentioned, one which we cannot

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

think has been generally known to Theosophists, for it is nothing less than a proposal to carry out an anti-Christian propaganda in the Eastern countries of the world. The seat of the movement, at the time it was launched, was necessarily America, where the founders lived, but its association with persons living in the East was to accomplish its end. This the remainder of the passage proves.

"Later, it has determined to spread among the 'poor benighted heathen' such evidences as to the practical results of Christianity as will at least give both sides of the story to the communities among which missionaries are at work. With this view it has established relations with associations and individuals throughout the East, to whom it furnishes authenticated reports of the Ecclesiastical crimes and misdemeanours, schisms and heresies, controversies and litigations, doctrinal differences and biblical criticisms and reviews with which the press of Christian Europe [not America?] constantly teems" . . . "The Theosophical Society thought it simple justice to make the facts known in Palestine, India, Ceylon, Cashmere, Tartary, Thibet, China and Japan."

An Untheosophical Object

If the above paragraph does not speak for itself, and calls for any comment from us, it should at least be noted that the Society which professed to see "some good" in all the religions and philosophies of the world, and inscribed "Universal Brother-

Summary and Conclusion

hood" on its banners, proposed, in the second year of its existence, to start two separate missions. One was at least a harmless endeavour to enlighten Western Christians as to the good qualities of the less known Oriental faiths, and the other was a plan to furnish the minds of no less ignorant Orientals with every procurable piece of information damaging to Christianity, its churches and its operations; to give details of every crime, every unsavoury scandal, every controversy and discreditable division that could be raked up from the none too clean "press of Christian Europe"—but not of America—and to shoot it on the "be-nighted" and perhaps gratified Eastern continent. Truly, the proposal strikes us, to say the least, as quite untheosophical, but we can imagine other readers being less struck than we are with its theoretical inconsistency, and more so with its evident spirit of partiality, irresponsibility, mischief and malice.

We have said that the passage from the *Isis* Preface is in our view interpretative of the mind of Madame Blavatsky. Indeed, if we had read it in any place unsigned, our intuition would have recognized it as hers, for it is unmistakably prophetic of the spirit of controversial muck-raking displayed alike in the Mahatma and Blavatsky Letters.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

The Asiatic Campaign

We have not found in Theosophical history—apart from a bare mention of an alleged “order of the Master” in the *E.H.T.S.*—any explanation of the transfer of the founders’ operations from America to India. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that the “later determination” announced in *Isis* was its pretext and purpose, and that the way for it was opened, by some response from the East, for the new Asiatic campaign.

The Blavatsky and Mahatma Letters make frequent and very bitter comments on the conflicts which arose between the pioneer Theosophists and Christian missionaries, but they throw very little light on the practical side of the projected counter-operations in the mission fields. Nevertheless we cannot fail to learn from reading them that they fulfil as far as letters can the programme outlined in the *Isis* Preface. Two or three passages may be quoted to show the leaders exchanging confidences on this aspect of their work.

Colonel Olcott writes to H.P.B. reporting on his visits to Ceylon in company with Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. “Now I take L—— to see how he will rub on with them. He is simply a village curate out on a ‘bust’ and never will expand beyond that. . . . However, as an ex-Padri he will pass there, and he certainly will not be scheming to upset the T.S. and found a new Dispensation” (*B.L.*, p. 327). “I take Leadbeater to Ceylon via Tubicorin” (p. 330). “There was a great crowd here on Satur-

Summary and Conclusion

day evening to hear his experiences. He goes the whole figure for B^m and against Xty”! (p. 334).

“He will not be scheming to upset the T.S. and found a new dispensation”, writes the Colonel. Will he not? Give him time and an approving President, and he will attempt these very things. Little did the reforming founders imagine that in after years, when, like King Hezekiah, they “slept with their fathers”, Bishop Leadbeater and Dr. Besant would reign in their stead, and build up again the high places which they had destroyed, rear up altars for Christ, revise the Mass, and re-ordinate the Christian priesthood.

A Draft Prospectus

After she was relieved of her official cares in order to write *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. from time to time informed Mr. Sinnett as to the progress of the work. “I am hard on S.D. What will come out of it I do not know but facts, facts and facts are heaped in it all relating to Christian robbery and and theft” (*B.L.*, p. 160).

We are not concerned with what came out of *The Secret Doctrine*; it is enough for the present to note what the writer professed to have put into it, and with what zest she reported to her associates the heaps of facts she had collected to the discredit of Christianity, not now for the exclusive enjoyment of the “benighted” East, but for the enlightenment of the whole world.

Needless to say we are not recounting these in-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters

stances of passionate prejudice against Christianity in order to excite sympathy for it or to raise resentment against one of its foes. Our object is to show that in making her private feelings and opinions seem to come from the minds and pens of the Mahatmas, Madame Blavatsky was escaping personal responsibility for their unscrupulous tone, and at the same time increasing their power over the minds and her readers and adherents. This would have been her motive in employing them in such a way.

The Motive of Necessity

Our readers may have observed that the motives of personal power and bias against Christianity, the operations of which we have barely sketched, are much akin, and it will eventually appear that they both became merged into and swallowed up by the third motive we have to mention—that of Necessity. We assume it to be a matter of general observation that any act which, because of its evil nature, the person committing it does not wish to be known, may require as a consequence the committal of another or a series of similar acts, in order to keep it continually cloaked. Thus a first falsehood may involve a train of falsehood, one fraud may call for more frauds, and one murder for many murders. The terrible necessity of going on is ever present to the mind of the wrong-doer who does not dare to go back; and this is more so in proportion to the seeming good he has enjoyed or done on the strength of his evil deeds.

Summary and Conclusion

“I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.”

So speaks Macbeth in the mid-career of crime; and if we change “blood” to “fraud”, so, in our reading of her story, speaks Madame Blavatsky. We have described the literary deceit she practised on her relations in 1870 as her “first disobedience”. Upon whom, five years later, did she practise her second, assuming that her pen was honourably occupied in the interval? It was “on the nose” of Colonel Olcott that she precipitated (by what means we are not told) the moralistic *juvenilia* of the “Luxor Letters”, which she said the Egyptian Brethren thought “good enough for the green Americans”. Unhappily, one of this class was thoroughly taken in. If, as the context warrants us in thinking, the experiment was at first a financial expedient or even a joke, its success was a moral misadventure, for it committed “Serapis”, said to be one of the wise and grave members of the Nile Lodge, to signing some of the most nonsensical and sordid epistles in Theosophical history. Doubtless there was strong necessity behind these means taken to secure the adherence of the Colonel, and the Luxor Letters seem to have clinched his conversion.

In due time the co-founders sailed to India, and brought their phenomena to bear upon the mind of Mr. A. P. Sinnett, an Anglo-Indian editor who thought himself any colour but “green”; he proved,

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

as our pages show, as credulous as the American Colonel, and a far more efficient agent in the consummation of the subsequent world-wide imposture. First came the exhibitions of parlour magic, then the talk about "the Brothers" as the powers behind it, then the suggestion that they would write letters if properly approached, then the first Letter. This necessary Indian literary deceit having hit its mark as truly as the Egyptian shaft, necessity called for seven or eight more, each one helping to make good the claims of its forerunners; and once the Mahatmas' existence had been firmly established in Mr. Sinnett's mind and their Letters indelibly printed in the London press, the remaining ten years of their inventor's life were fatally pledged to the necessary production of a hundred more illiterate epistles, the elaboration of personal, official, domestic and mechanical deceits, and the employment of innocent or guilty participants in her operations. It needs no argument from us to establish these facts. It is enough to read the two collections of Letters herein noticed to realize in imagination the pathetic plight of "The Old Lady" perpetually dodging small discoveries and planning new strategies in her struggles with the intellectual and moral worlds she had challenged, provoked and defied. Her worst agony was that she could not "return", confess her fault, obtain forgiveness, and lose her dubious gains; she must "go o'er" to keep them.

Summary and Conclusion

The Heel of Achilles

Seeing that we have speculated in the foregoing pages of this Section on the motives that may have prompted the Theosophical foundress to her questionable acts, we owe it to her, as well as to our readers, to say that these small satisfactions of personal power, sectarian antipathy and safety could not have been the sole objects of her life. There must have been present to her mind the desire to serve some greater cause, the triumph of which she calculated would extenuate and ultimately efface her misdeeds. This cause was the spread of the doctrines of Theosophy throughout the world.

The close acquaintance with the mind of Madame Blavatsky which we have gained in the course of our researches leads us to conclude that the ideal which she made the object of her endeavour was not an ignoble one, and that her enthusiasm for its service was for the most part genuine. She threw her extraordinary abilities with a consuming zeal into the construction of a synthesis of human knowledge in the departments of religion, science and philosophy, and it is probable that she hoped, as a consequence of producing an intellectual accord among thinking people, to bring about some approach to a universal social order. This at least was the clear implication of the original Theosophical doctrine, and the broad conception of it held by many of her earlier associates and later adherents, as well as by those who respected but did not share their beliefs.

It is perhaps necessary to say that in the promo-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

tion of these general aims, Madame Blavatsky was by no means first in the universal field. Ancient and modern times had seen the birth of men who thought it not impious to take all knowledge for their province, and many philosophical systems had been built up which became potent instruments of human enlightenment and progress. Yet there was one claim advanced on behalf of the Theosophical synthesis which, if not historically unique, was certainly distinctive in character. This was that its main propositions had not been constructed out of the studies and unaided cogitations of their propounder, Madame Blavatsky, but were gratuitously communicated to her from a lodge of remote-dwelling sages. This was a startling claim; for if it could be made good, it guaranteed the authority, continuity and truth of the Theosophical doctrine; but if it could not be made good, it was an element of weakness and danger, which might yet prove to be the "Achilles Heel" of the system.

Twenty-five years after the foundation of the Theosophical Society, Madame Blavatsky died, and her work and literary remains were surrendered to her successors. If the Mahatmas, or "Masters", as they were now called, had any further teachings to communicate, they had but to appoint new initiate operators, "at the other end of the line", to receive them. We are given to understand in the post-Blavatsky writings that this was done, and we have in a previous Section sketched the literary outcome of the alleged collaboration.

Summary and Conclusion

The next quarter of a century had more critical events in store for the Society. Mr. A. P. Sinnett, the receiver and possessor of the original Mahatma Letters, and perhaps the only person at the time familiar with their whole contents, died in the year 1921, and by a legacy made optional their publication to the world. The Mahatma Letters consequently came from the press some time before the year of Theosophical Jubilee in 1925, and they were put forth by their compiler as an act of faith in and loyalty to Madame Blavatsky and their reputed writers.

The Opening of the Seals

We remarked at the beginning of this book that the full text of *The Mahatma Letters* received at its publication little notice in the press, and was practically ignored by the journals of the Theosophical Society. We do not infer from this silence that the Letters in their complete form have not been read by Theosophical officials. On the contrary, we believe they have been carefully studied, and we can only interpret the reserve shown in regard to them as due, not to indifference, but to a true appreciation of their startling character and contents.

Although the Mahatma Letters, so far as we have observed, have not been read aloud from Theosophical housetops, nor analysed in the journals, nor studied in the Lodges, it is impossible to believe that the large number of reprints of them

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

that have come from the press have not found thousands of quiet readers, whose ears and understandings have been open the while to the whisper of solitary reasoning. What, we wonder, have been the thoughts of these readers who, by the mere possession of a copy of a book, participate in the opening of the seals of the greatest literary mystery of modern times?

The Seals of the Mystery

The seals of the Mahatma mystery, which from the beginning have held the truth in bonds, and frustrated the endeavours of those who would have released it, are, according to our observation, four in number, and to them we assign the names of Falsity, Secrecy, Sophistry and Power. In the order of time, the seal of Falsity was the first affixed, and it was to the end of reinforcing its failing hold that the other three were added as required. It was for this reason that the ancient and oft-employed seal of Secrecy was the second to be affixed. Falsity's face was in due time veiled, and effrontery, which had sufficed to overbear the intelligence of an intimate few, gave place to Secrecy, which was more suited to convince the distributed many.

Although the seal of Secrecy was used to hide the face and the works of Falsity, it must be said that the great body of the keepers of the Mahatmic secrets were not themselves dishonest. Though deceived, they were not deceivers. If they were credulous, incurious or indifferent to a remarkable

Summary and Conclusion

degree, they were yet amiable, enthusiastic and well-intentioned converts to a new theory of life, and eager to bring others under the persuasions that had convinced themselves. Exceptions ought to be made, however, in the cases of individuals who—granting they were at first deceived—committed themselves too deeply to Falsity's claims, and when later they were undeceived, were reluctant to undeceive others. They either made no acknowledgment of the light they had received, or they made it, like Mr. Sinnett, too late, like Mr. Jinarājadāsa, too vaguely, or like Mr. Leadbeater, too secretly.

If Mr. Sinnett had bequeathed the Mahatma Letters to the Society whose leaders doubtless thought they were entitled to possess them, they would by this time be lying among the archives in Adyar, in the place whence most of them originally came. Their flights across the world's waters, outward and home, would be ended, secrecy would have shut them in, and their falsity would have remained unproved to this day. This, although it was the acknowledged desire of the Theosophical heads, was not to be their fate. Mr. Sinnett preferred to dispose of the Letters in such a way as to make possible their publication and critical examination. Mr. Barker, the careful compiler, himself opened the seal of Secrecy, and made it possible for us to open the innermost seal of Falsity.

Of the two remaining seals, Sophistry and Power, we need say but little. While the fact of Falsity remained unproved, the role of Sophistry was an important one, for it was constantly em-

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

ployed in warding off, with fallacious arguments, persistent evasions and personal abuse, the questions and honest doubts of disciples of the Mahatmas in the Society and of critics in the outer world.

In the order of time the last seal to be affixed to the Mahatma mystery was the seal of Power, which was the consummation and official counter-seal of the other three. A succession of leaders who claimed exclusive access to the Mahatmas' teachings, and were consequently their sole interpreters, were credited by their devoted adherents with possessing occult knowledge in abundant measure and in a constant flow. Being screened by Secrecy in their consultations with the supposed oracles, they naturally acquired stupendous personal repute, in proportion as they were admired, trusted and obeyed by those who stood in the outer courts. Power was thus based on false claims and foolish concessions, and having been the last seal of the mystery to be affixed, it will probably be the last to be removed. For although its foundation is now virtually gone from under it, it will require time for this fact to be realized, and for the self-imposed coils of credence to be unwound from the minds of multitudes of adherents in the world's five continents.

Whether the seal of Power will be finally broken early or late, its strength must henceforward decrease, for while it was a hard enough matter to bind it on in the name of a hidden mystery, it cannot but be harder to maintain it in view of a now proved imposture.

Consummatum est

We have finished the work we set out to do. Our object was to solve a long-standing and important literary problem, and our method was to ask a plain question and to support our answer to it by as clear a demonstration of its truth as we could make. Having resolved at the beginning to examine the Mahatma Letters without prejudice in favour of a particular conclusion, and proposed—as indicated on our title page—to sail on uncharted seas towards no actual or hypothetical port, we found ourselves carried, as we read on, in an unescapable dialectical drift. We had before us no design to impugn the conduct of individuals, to raise unfriendly contentions in or against corporate societies, or to oppose or defend particular teachings, religions and philosophies. Our argumentative course was shaped for us by a single principle—the contents of the Letters—and we reached our destination, as we believe, in obedience to a logic that was irresistible. We are glad to find, in concluding this undertaking, that in respect of tactics our voyage has been successfully conducted under the advice of Plato, best of pilots, who in his *Republic* so happily lays down the guiding principle for every truth-seeking and truth-finding adventure: “Whither the argument, like a wind, takes us, thither we must go.”

INDEX

A

Adwaitee, 103
 Adyar, Madras, 22
 Akasic Library, 48
 "Alcyone," 285
 Allahabad, 33, 42
 American style, 118
 Ammonius Saccas, 72
 Amritsar, 41
Anatta doctrine, 113
 Anti-Blavatsky, 207
 Anti-Christian motive, 304
 Anti-feminism, 206
 Apuleius, 98
 Arundale, Francesca, 23
 "Astral Post," 26
 Authors' thanks to the Mahatmas, 296
 Authors' theory of handwriting, 244

B

"Back to Blavatsky" movement, 286
 Bacon quoted, 16, 57, 68
 Bacon-Shakespeare mystery, 141
Banner of Light, 143
 Barker, A. T., 25
 Baseden Butt, 214
 Beal's *Catena* quoted and misquoted, 109
 Besant, Mrs. Annie, 19, 213
 her admission of "the well-known Script," 263
 her part in the Superstructure, 283
 Bhagavad Gita, 98
 Bhola Deva Sarmi and Bowaji, 243
 Bible, The, 201
Birth Stories of the Buddha, 99

Blavatsky, Madame H. P., *passim*
 arrives at Simla, 27
 her education, 37
 in New York, 74
 on the "Kiddle Incident," 154
 on Precipitation, 155
 as forwarding agent, 172
 her style compared, 176-85
 Franco-English parallels, 186
 her Biblical references, 199
 her masculine disguise, 205
 criticizes herself, 207
 did she visit Tibet? 211
 Odessa Letter, 213, 245, 249
 her Letter to *The Times*, 234
 her sister's letter, 244
 her defence, 252
 threatens to retire, 255
 discusses fraud and forgery, 258
 at bay, 267
 her mastery of English, 272
 her "second death," 297
 her motives, 301
 her early travels, 303
 Blavatsky, hypothesis formulated, 165
 Bodhisattvas, 109
 Bochme, 72
 Books resting on the Masters, 278
 Brahman, 103
 Brotherhood—
 Tibetan, 43
 Universal, 63, 73, 306
 Egyptian, 298
 Buddha, a "Planetary Spirit," 81
 Buddhism corrupted, 105
 Buddhist Liberal Catholics, 279

C

Chesney, Colonel, 52
 Chohan, 34, 39

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- Christianity, 303
Cicero, 49
Clairvoyant faculties, 43
Compton-Rickett, L. A., 30
Consummatum est, 203
Contradictions of Sinnett, 45
Correction in Sinnett's text, 24
Cosmic Scroll, The, 48
Cosmological Queries, 85, 277
Coulomb, Madame, 247
Criticism of *Isis*, 76
Cross on the letter M, 227
- D
- Dalai Lama, 39
Damodar Mavalanka, 23
 his disappearance, 221
 is he also Gjiral Kool? 223
 he is "Desinherited," 295
Darjeeling, 41
Dawn, Sydney, N.S.W., 260
Deletions and corrections in
 Early Teachings, 23
Denial by Sinnett of similarity
 in style, 173
Denial of God, 87
"Desinherited, The," 295
Devachan, 108
Devanāgarī, 241
D'Holbach, Baron, 47
Dhyan Chohans, 7
Dictionaries, 46, 290
Djugal Kool, 51, 288, 293
 his name spelled eight ways,
 198
Dog-Latin, The Mahatmas', 125
- E
- Early Teachings of the Masters*, 17,
 22
 deletions and corrections in, 23
 criticized by Compton-Rickett,
 30
Eckhart, 72
Eclectic branch of the T.S., 40
- Eglington, 226, 229, 239
Egypt, 178
Elberfeld, 140, 141
English, 273
Esoteric Buddhism, 16
 errors in, 68
Ether, 48
Eusebius, 72
- F
- Facsimile Letter by K.H., 246
Faulty Devanāgarī, 241
Feats of Endurance, Mahatmas',
 40 *First Eight Letters examined, 56
First Letter from K.H., 28
Franco-English parallels, 186-7
Fraud and forgery, 258
"Frenchified," 183
- G
- Gharling-Cho, 34
Globes, Seven, 85
God, 87
Grandison, 191, 195
Great Cycle, The, 82
- H
- Handwriting, authors' theory
 on, 244
Handwriting of the Mahatmas,
 226
Happy Valley described, 288
Hare, W. Loftus, 20
Hartmann, Franz, Letter to, 246
Hilarion, Master, 250
Himalayas, 129
Hodgson, Richard, 267, 301
Hodgson's examination of the
 Letters, 270, 302
*H.P.B. and the Masters of the
 Wisdom*, 211
Hubbe Schleiden, 271
Hume, A. O., 22, 33, 254

Index

I

- Iamblichus, 98
"Ideas," 150
"If there be no Mahatmas——,"
 257
Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky, 37
Indian Philosophy, 101
Infallibility of the Mahatmas, 43
Isis Unveiled, 16, 76

J

- Jhelum telegram, The, 41
Jinarājadāsa, Mr., 47
 on Precipitation, 128
Judge, W. Q., 264

K

- Karma, 69, 114
Kashmir, 41
Key-words in Blavatsky and the
 Mahatmas' Letters, 176
K.H. Letter in facsimile, 248
Kiddle Incident, The, 140-61
 Blavatsky on, 154
Kingsford, Mrs. Anna, 94-208
Kin-te, Book of, 46
Knight, George, on Tibet, 38
Knowledge of French by Mahat-
 mas, 116
Koot Hoomi, Mahatma, *passim*
 his first letter, 28
 his signatures, 231, 243
 facsimile of letter by, 248
 Leadbeater's account of, 287
 his disappearance, 295
Krishnamurti, J., 285

L

- Lamasery of Ghaling-Tcho, 34
Last doubts of Sinnett, 266
Leadbeater, C. W., 19-23
 admits Letters not written by
 Mahatmas, 265

- Leadbeater, C. W.—*cont.*
 his *Lives of Alcyone*, 285
 describes Mahatmas' home, 289
Letters in detail examined, 230
Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to
 A. P. Sinnett, 17-22
Lhasa, variously spelled, 36
Liability of Mahatmas to err, 45
Liberties with proper names, 197
Libraries of the Mahatmas, 46
Life of Anna Kingsford, 95
London Lodge, 15
Luxor Lodge, 178

M

- Madame at bay, 267
Mahachohan, 279
Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett,
 The, passim, 15-22
 date of publication, 23
 little public interest in, 29
 official disapproval of, 30
 MSS. of, examined in detail,
 230
 Summary conclusion on, 298
Mahatmas, *passim*
 are Indians, not Tibetans, 37
 their feats of endurance, 40
 their infallibility, 43
 their attributes, 44
 their liability to err, 45
 their libraries, 46
 on Western Science, 47
 seven portraits of, 50
 their criticism of *Isis*, 76
 their curiosity, 79
 their denial of God, 87
 they dismiss religion, 90
 on Anna Kingsford, 93
 on Indian Philosophy, 101
 style not Oriental, 115
 knowledge of French, 116
 American style, 118
 their Dog-Latin, 125

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- Mahatmas—*continued*
on Precipitation, 127, 130, 159
on the Kiddie Letter, 140–61
no witnesses as to their reality,
167
on the Bible, 201
their anti-feminism, 206
anti-Blavatsky, 207
their handwriting, 226
the double M, 227
invented in America, 250
described by Leadbeater, 287
Mahavagga, 105
Maitland, Edward, 93
Malice and Necessity, 309
Man by a woman chela, 69
Manuscripts examined, 224–51
twenty-one writers, 226
the letter M, 227
signatures, 227, 241, 243
styles described, 228
letters in detail, 230
stationery employed, 240
faulty Devanāgarī, 241
authors' theory on handwriting,
244
reproduction forbidden, 246
a K.H. letter photographed, 248
authors' thanks to the Mahat-
mas, 296
Masculine disguise of H.P.B., 205
Massey, C., 94
Masters and the Path, The, 287
Max Müller discredited by Ma-
hatmas, 102
Māyā, meaning of, 104
McGovern, Dr., on Tibet, 38
Monier-Williams, 102
Moses, Stainton, 81
Motives examined, 301
Mountains of Tibet, 60
Moyra, Mahatma, *passim*
visits New York, 37
his handwriting discussed, 228
Music, 290
- N
- New York, 75, 169, 195, 271
No witnesses to the writers of the
Letters, 167
Numerical Structure of the Uni-
verse, 84
- O
- Occult Review, The*, notice in, 34
Occult Science, 102
Occult World, The, 16, 56
published in 1881, 128
Odessa Letter of 1870, 213, 245,
249
Olcott, Col. H. S., *passim*
his criticism of *Isis*, 77
his "indiscretions," 80
"Old Lady," 60, 312
"Osmosis," 33
- P
- Pai-Wouen-Yen-Fu Dictionary*, 143
Paper, Tibetan, 133, 135
Parabrahm, 103
Paracelsus, 72
Parallel of styles, 116
Parallel versions of Oriental
Scripture, 106, 111
Paris, 79, 169
Peling, 40
Perfect Way, The, 40, 93
Perpetual Motion, 89
Phenomena at Simla, 33, 56
Philosophy, Indian, 101
Piccadilly séance, 239
Pioneer, The, of Allahabad, 27, 57
paper abstracted, 235, 237
test, 219
Plagiarism, 140
Planetary Spirits, 81
Plato quoted, 150
Plutarch's view of the soul, 112
Poets misquoted, 122
Pope, Alexander, quoted, 29

Index

Porphyrius, 72
Portraits of the Mahatmas, 50
Postscript, 21
Precipitation, 127
 first proposed by Sinnett, 57
 fully discussed, 127
 the Mahatma's view, 127, 130,
 159
Jinarājadāsa on, 128
Summary of evidence, 138
 Blavatsky on, 155
Preface, 15
Presidency of London Lodge, 15
Problem of Motive, The, 301
Psychic Research, 268
Punctuation erratic, 121
Pythagoras, 113

Q

Queries answered, 85
"Quick communications," 41

R

Reincarnation misunderstood, 91
 denied in *Isis*, 92
 affirmed by Kingsford, 93
 denied by Mahatmas, 97
Religion dismissed by Mahatmas,
 90
Report, Hodgson's, 267, 301
Reproduction of Letters for-
 bidden, 246
Rhys Davids, 105
"Rosetta Stone," 146
Russian spy, 301

S

Sacred Books of the East, 101
Schmiechen, the German artist,
 53
 his portraits of Mahatmas,
 facing pages 50, 62
Scientists quoted, List of, 47

Secret Doctrine, The, 16
 term first used by Sinnett, 44
Septenary System, The, 83
Serapis, The Master, 59, 178, 249
Seven Globes, 85
Shakespeare-Bacon, 141
Shan mun yih tung, 109
Shigatze, 39
Simla phenomena, 33, 56, 71
Sinnett, A. P., *passim*
 his *Occult World*, 17, 25, 33
 his *Esoteric Buddhism*, 17, 26
 he seeks a sign, 27
 first letter from K.H., 28
 witnesses the Simla Phenome-
 na, 33, 56
 his contradictions, 45
Editor of *The Pioneer*, Alla-
 bad, 57
on Precipitation, 127
the Kiddle Incident, 140
his last doubts on the Letters,
 266

Skeptics, The, 253

Smoking Mahatma, The, 38
Stationery employed, 240
Style of Letters compared with
 Blavatsky's, 228
Subba Row, 232
Sukhāvatī, 110
Summary and Conclusions, 298
Swedenborg, 73

T

Tampering with the Mails, 61
Tathāgata, 110
Telegram from Jhelum, 41, 42
Theosophia, the word and the
 doctrine, 71
Theosophical Canon, The, 67
Theosophical Review, 38
Theosophical Society, The, *pas-
sim*
 founded in New York 1875,
 16

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Theosophical Society, The, Three Objects, 73 | Tobacco in Tibet prohibited, 38 |
| Theosophical Superstructure, 275 | The Smoking Mahatma, 38 |
| the occult hierarchy, 275 | To-ling Monastery, 56 |
| constructing a cosmology, 277 | Travers, Maude, 229 |
| Buddhist Liberal Catholics, 279 | Twenty-one writers of MSS., 225 |
| Mahatmic support to the T.S., 281 | |
| Mrs. Besant's part, 283 | |
| "Alcyone," 285 | |
| Mr. Leadbeater to the rescue, 287 | U |
| his <i>Masters and the Path</i> , 292 | Universal Brotherhood, 28, 43, 63 |
| Farewells, 295 | Upanishads, 97 |
| <i>Theosophist, The</i> , 17 | |
| Theosophy's Old Testament, 75 | V |
| Threatened retirement of Blavatsky, 255 | Vedânta, 102 |
| Tibet, Geography of, 36 | |
| map of, facing page 36 | W |
| <i>Times, The</i> , "Test," 219 | Wachtmeister, Countess, 27, 296 |
| Blavatsky's letter to, 234 | Ward, Sam, 239 |
| | Western Science, 47 |
| | "Wisdom Religion, The," 74 |
| | Z |
| | Zelihovsky, Vera, 244 |